

North Curry Church of England Primary School

Greenway, North Curry, Taunton, TA3 6NQ

Inspection dates 16–17 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Most reach standards which are above the national average in these subjects by the end of Year 6. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is well developed.
- Teaching is typically outstanding. Teachers know their pupils extremely well. Teachers plan lessons which extend the thinking of every pupil and they regularly check on how much each pupil has understood.
- The headteacher, with highly effective support from senior leaders and from governors, has ensured that high standards have been maintained throughout the many recent changes of staff.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well. They display a real thirst for knowledge in lessons. They say they feel very safe at school. Parents agree that the school does everything it can to keep everyone safe.
- School leaders have developed a remarkably successful Early Years Foundation Stage. Highly effective teaching ensures that younger children are thoroughly prepared for the move to Year 1.
- By means of regular training and review of their own work, governors know how to check on everyone’s progress and achievements. They are totally focused on helping the school to improve even further.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons. Two of these were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- During further visits to classes, the inspector looked at pupils' books and work files and listened to pupils reading. He joined a group of pupils for lunch and spoke with others in the playground.
- Discussions were held with school leaders, with teachers and with pupils. The inspector spoke by telephone to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector met school governors and reviewed minutes of their meetings. Other important policies and documents were scrutinised, including those which show how the school evaluates its own work, its safeguarding policy and how it records behaviour incidents.
- The inspector took account of the 33 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire. The views of 11 staff who returned their questionnaires were considered. The inspector gained the views of pupils in meetings and by analysing the school's recent survey of pupil opinion.
- During this inspection, the inspector asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement for children looked after, on free school meals and the most able pupils. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of support services.

Inspection team

Bob Pugh, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- North Curry is smaller than the average-sized primary school. All pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- A very few pupils come from Traveller families.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is extra funding available for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals or are in the care of the local authority, is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below the national average.
- There have been some staff changes in recent terms. The headteacher has been in post since January 2014. While the number of pupils on roll has remained stable, the number of classes reduced from six in previous years to five at the beginning of this academic year.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on teachers' existing strengths as subject leaders to ensure that pupils' learning is consistently strong in all subjects and develops their understanding of their role in the life of contemporary Britain.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, senior and middle leaders are totally committed to ensuring that every pupil makes as much progress as possible. By maintaining a high profile and visibility around the school during the day, they are extremely successful at conveying their high ambitions to all members of staff and to pupils.
 - All school leaders, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, have a deep understanding of how well every pupil is doing. This is because systems for monitoring the school's work provide precise information about how skilful teaching enables pupils to make outstanding progress.
 - The accuracy of monitoring is strengthened by the steps all leaders take to compare the achievements of pupils at this school with those in others.
 - The headteacher, senior and middle leaders have introduced highly successful strategies for stretching the most able pupils. As a result, in recent years, high proportions of pupils have exceeded national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Everyone makes great gains from their starting points.
 - The outstanding curriculum encourages pupils to develop a strong sense of curiosity about the world. From the very start, pupils demonstrate a thirst for knowledge. Their musical and sporting abilities have developed rapidly, as a result of the specialist teaching which leaders have provided using available additional funding. In a few lessons, pupils' learning slows which hinders their understanding of how they may contribute to the life of contemporary Britain.
 - There are excellent links with the local church. Teaching about the similarities and differences in other faiths and lifestyles has a good impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - The headteacher meets parents every day. There are many opportunities for parents and teachers to discuss their children's progress.
 - The local authority receives information about pupils' achievement. While it has offered finance and personnel support, it has not reviewed the school's effectiveness with its leaders. The headteacher has received outstanding support from a local leader of education.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governors have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This is because they visit regularly, and discuss progress with staff, pupils and parents. They know about standards, quality and strengths of teaching in the school and have addressed underperformance when necessary. In meetings, they carefully question senior leaders about standards and how school priorities are being addressed. They use information on achievement to great effect, to challenge the headteacher about pupils' rates of progress and how resources are organised to enable everyone to do their best. Governors have a very clear understanding of the impact of pupil premium expenditure and how primary sports money has been used to increase participation. They make sure that excellent performance by teachers is rewarded through promotion and salary rises. They have ensured that early years provision is highly effective and that the school meets all requirements for keeping pupils safe.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. In every lesson, they show a real love of learning. They are very polite to each other and to staff and visitors, in class and at lunch and play times.
- Pupils understand the school's few simple rules. They agree that they make sense and help to keep everyone safe.
- Pupils arrive promptly, enter their classrooms calmly and are ready to begin work straight away. No time is ever wasted.
- Pupils are always positive in class and around the school. An excellent example of how well they use time was seen when they were asked to carry out research on plant growth in science. They went about their tasks enthusiastically, inside and outside the classroom. They reported back accurately on what they had observed.
- Attendance levels are good and have improved over time. In partnership with the local authority, school leaders work very well with the children of Traveller families who attend the school to promote a positive attitude towards regular attendance.
- The school's arrangements for ensuring that pupils are safe is outstanding. Pupils feel exceptionally safe

and they know that they can use the 'worry box' which is placed in every classroom if they want to raise a concern. Pupils say that their teachers listen to them and respond quickly when there is a problem.

- Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of different kinds of bullying, and they learn about safe ways to use the internet. They say that bullying is hardly ever heard of at this school. On those very rare occasions when incidents occur, action is swift and reports and logs well maintained.
- Parents are right to believe that their children are kept safe at school. A parent whose child has recently returned to school following a period of illness was full of praise for staff and pupils and their helpful attitudes. She told the inspector 'I know that she is safe there, I am so proud that my children go to the school. I would recommend it to any other parent ... it holds a special place in my heart.'

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching is typically outstanding throughout the school. Teachers have the highest expectations that pupils will work hard and do well. They use their excellent subject knowledge to help pupils make rapid and sustained progress in English, mathematics and other subjects.
- Skilful questioning provides teachers with precise information about when pupils are ready to move on. They take great care to go over work as often as necessary when they feel that a topic has not been understood. As a result, they can be confident about the depth of understanding which every pupil has gained.
- Highly skilled teaching assistants are adept at offering help and guidance. They prompt pupils to try hard to arrive at answers before they offer assistance. Their interventions are well-judged, which means that pupils do not become over-reliant on help.
- Because teaching is so well organised, the most able pupils are stretched and challenged to work as hard as they can, for example by being given work which is otherwise planned for older pupils. This helps these pupils to attain exceptionally well and to exceed national expectations in English and mathematics.
- Books are marked regularly and provide concise, high quality feedback to pupils. Effective planning of homework helps to reinforce skills learned during the day. Very often, pupils are asked to review and comment upon their own work. Their targets are updated regularly and they are constantly challenged to do better.
- Very effective teaching of reading, writing and communication is evident in all subjects. When writing up a science experiment, pupils were given careful guidance about the use of capital letters. While practising a complicated running exercise with a ball in physical education, pupils were reminded that they would do even better if they communicated clearly with each other. In both cases, pupils responded well and their work improved as a result.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- From their very earliest days at the school, pupils make rapid and sustained progress. By the time they leave, their achievements in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average. They are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The most able make gains which are significantly above the national average for pupils of their age, especially in reading and writing.
- Standards in spelling and grammar are exceptionally high. Pupils take great care of their workbooks and files. They show great pride in their work, which is almost always presented neatly and tidily. They follow their teachers' advice and provide more information or make corrections when asked to.
- In each of the last three years, the proportion of pupils who do well in the national phonics screening check for Year 1 pupils has increased. This is the result of a totally consistent approach to teaching which helps them learn successfully about the sounds that letters make when building up words. Pupils take great delight in correcting their teacher when she has (deliberately) got something the wrong way round or made a mistake.
- Pupils read widely and often. Younger pupils read enthusiastically to others in their class, taking great care to sound out letters and build up words. This helps them to become confident readers. Pupils of all ages are eager to contribute their ideas in discussions and they are encouraged to talk about their ideas with each other and to the whole class. As a result, their communication skills are very well developed.
- Precise tracking of achievement by teachers demonstrates that there are no significant differences in the

rates of progress among different groups. Girls make slightly more progress than boys, though boys exceed national expectations in all subjects. The gains made by pupils entitled to receive additional funding are as strong as those made by others.

- The very few pupils who need additional help make good progress over time, because they are provided with time and assistance to go over topics which cause them difficulties.
- Pupils' achievements in sport have improved because primary sports money has been used to provide specialist teaching and coaching during the day and in after-school clubs. Pupils talk with great pride of their successes in football and basketball tournaments, and are very keen to take on new experiences such as learning to play hockey.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children make consistently strong and swift progress from their starting points. They are exceptionally well prepared for the move into Year 1. Teachers and their assistants frequently check on how much children know. They do this sensitively while working with individuals and small groups in the well-equipped classroom and play area. Their record keeping is comprehensive and highly personalised.
- Teaching overtime is outstanding and ensures that children make outstanding progress. The classroom and outdoor learning environment are well-equipped and stimulating. Resources are exceedingly well matched to children's needs and interests and inspire them to work at activities which they find absorbing.
- Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Through their planning and their actions, leaders demonstrate a total commitment to giving children the best possible start to school.
- Leaders have established excellent relationships with parents, through regular contact before a child starts school, and frequent meetings and other exchanges of information once they are in school. The open-door policy encourages parents to feel confident about visiting regularly and to play a very active role in their children's development.
- The checks which teachers make on their progress at the end of Year 1 show that almost everyone meets or exceeds expectations as a result of exceptionally strong teaching from the start.
- The informative learning diaries which children keep with the help of staff, demonstrate the strength of their achievements. They also provide evidence of the rich and varied learning experiences the children enjoy in the classroom and in the wider community.
- Children behave outstandingly well. They quickly learn to get on with each other, develop strong self-control, and show how much they enjoy each other's company in their shared play and games.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	123797
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	448691
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	136
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dustine Harlow
Headteacher	Mark Braund
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 March 2010
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