

Widcombe Church of England Junior School

Pulteney Road, Bath, BA2 4JG

Inspection dates 21–22 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Achievement is outstanding. Pupils enthusiastically follow the school's vision of 'being the best you can'. They receive excellent support and guidance to enable them to achieve this goal.
- All pupils make rapid progress from their varying starting points. The standards reached by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 exceed national averages and are continuing to improve still further.
- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers are highly skilled and form very positive relationships with pupils. Pupils are very enthusiastic to learn and concentrate well in lessons.
- Teaching assistants support learning very effectively. Activities with individuals or small groups are very well planned and work well to increase the progress of pupils who find some aspects of their learning difficult.
- Pupils are given excellent guidance from adults so that they know clearly how to improve their work. In a small number of classes pupils would benefit from more time to act upon the very useful advice that teachers give them.
- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. Her relentless drive for excellence has ensured that the school has become even more effective than at the last inspection. The headteacher is well supported by other senior leaders who have a very clear vision for continued improvement.
- Middle leaders, some of whom are new to their role, work effectively to improve the quality of teaching through very focused guidance to less experienced teachers.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are keen to come to school and to learn. They get on well with each other and with the adults in school. Pupils are polite, well mannered and sensible.
- Pupils are very safe in school because of the outstanding care and guidance they receive. Bullying is very rare and pupils know what to do if they are concerned or worried.
- The school provides a very broad and stimulating curriculum. The school has acted on the suggestion made in the last inspection report and now has a very well organised programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils understand the importance of tolerance, respect and global diversity and are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have developed a very effective system for monitoring pupils' progress, identifying areas for improvement and then providing excellent professional development for all staff as it is required.
- Governors are highly effective at providing both challenge and support for the school. They know the school well and ask well-informed questions. This probing of the school's provision supports the capacity for sustained improvement.
- Parents are very pleased with the school. A very large majority of parents would recommend this school to others. Almost all say their children are happy, kept safe and are well behaved at school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 14 lessons. The inspectors observed seven of the lessons jointly with either the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors heard pupils reading, examined work in their books, attended two assemblies and observed activities in the playground and dinner hall.
- The inspectors held discussions with pupils, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and members of the governing body.
- The inspectors had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors examined a range of documents, including a summary of the school’s self-evaluation, the school’s plans for improvement and minutes of governors’ meetings. They also looked at documents showing how the quality of teaching is evaluated, the school’s information on pupils’ progress, and records relating to pupils’ safety, behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector analysed 77 returns to the online Parent View questionnaire and spoke informally to parents to seek their views. Inspectors also looked at the school’s own surveys of parents’ views and a letter from a parent.
- The inspector considered the views of the 18 staff who returned questionnaires.

Inspection team

Chris Chamberlain, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fran Ashworth

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized junior school.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for children in the care of the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs on the school roll is about 9%. A similar proportion have more severe needs or have a statement of special educational needs. This is lower than that found in most schools.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 6.
- Two pupils attend Three Ways Special School in Bath on a part-time basis for one or two days each week. Another child attends L'Ecole Française de Bristol for one day each week.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching even further, by ensuring that all pupils are given more frequent opportunities to act upon the advice given in marking to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The leadership provided by the headteacher is outstanding. She promotes the whole school vision of 'I want to be the best I can' in all that she does. She is well supported by senior leaders. The headteacher focuses relentlessly on improving the quality of teaching through individual support and regular staff training and has high expectations of pupils' behaviour, including those attending alternative provision. This then enables all pupils to make exceptional progress.
- The curriculum is very broad and stimulating. High quality teaching and a focus on reading, writing and mathematics ensure that pupils achieve well and have the skills required for secondary school. The school's exciting curriculum also includes the provision of high quality music, sport and drama activities so that pupils are very keen to learn.
- The school has worked very hard in response to the area identified for improvement in the previous inspection report and now has excellent provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils. Activities to support British values are skilfully planned for each year group to ensure that pupils understand the importance of tolerance, diversity and democracy. The school has been awarded the Inclusion Quality Mark and a committee of governors meets regularly to monitor the impact of improvements that are made in this area.
- The school has an equality and diversity committee which meets regularly to review the progress and well-being of vulnerable pupils. This ensures that all pupils are treated equally and there is no discrimination. This fosters excellent relationships between pupils.
- The school has used the primary school sport funding successfully to improve the confidence and skills of adults teaching sport. It has also increased the number of sports clubs that pupils can take part in and sustained its involvement in local sports tournaments and competitions. Pupils enjoy the range of sporting opportunities open to them and many have grown in confidence.
- The school has recently enhanced the role of middle leaders so that they are effective in leading their areas of responsibility and monitoring the performance of teachers in line with the school's robust appraisal process.
- The school successfully uses the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. A senior leader ensures that teachers and additional adults in school provide these pupils with effective support where it is needed. This ensures that disadvantaged pupils make very good progress. Procedures to track the progress of individual pupils are highly effective. Pupils who are not progressing as well as others are identified rapidly and given additional support or challenge. The school is developing very clear systems for accurately assessing pupils' progress following the removal of National Curriculum levels.
- Pupils' attendance and punctuality are monitored effectively by the school. Absence rates have improved recently and are now lower than the national average.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and monitored effectively by the governing body's safeguarding committee.
- To ensure good communication between home and school there is an informative weekly newsletter and regular link meetings with parents from each class are organised so that parental concerns or queries can be shared and answered by the headteacher.
- The local authority provides 'light-touch' support for this outstanding school.

■ The governance of the school:

Governors know the school well and provide a suitable balance of challenge and support for the headteacher and staff. Regular visits to the school alongside detailed reports from the headteacher ensure that governors are fully informed about the quality of teaching. They understand how the performance management process is skilfully linked to pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. Governors are fully aware of how underperformance is tackled by the school and how the best teaching is rewarded. Following recent training the governing body is able to ask challenging questions about data on the school's performance and understands how the school's data compares to national averages. Governors gather the views of parents through the use of questionnaires. They follow up queries and concerns and respond to these where they are able. The governing body undertakes its statutory duties for safeguarding pupils very effectively and understands fully how the school ensures that pupils' behaviour is outstanding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are enthusiastic about their school and keen to learn.
- Pupils are very well mannered, courteous and polite. They frequently hold doors open for adults and are confident to talk to adults visiting the school. Pupils are mature and very sensible.
- Pupils cooperate well with each other and persevere when an activity is very challenging.
- Pupils care for each other. When a child is hurt in the playground other pupils will quickly offer sympathy and support. Older pupils also support and look after younger pupils through the school's well-developed house and buddy system.
- In lessons pupils are very focused on their learning. They are keen to improve their skills and knowledge. They listen carefully to instructions and once they join the school quickly develop their independence. Disruption to learning is rare.
- The school manages pupils' behaviour very well, including that of those pupils who attend alternative provision. Pupils who join the school displaying challenging behaviour are supported and guided effectively so that they understand how to behave more appropriately. They can then enjoy being part of the class and focus on their learning.
- The school has clear rewards for good behaviour and a set of four steps of sanctions which are followed if there is any poor behaviour. However, pupils say that it is extremely rare for pupils to progress very far along the steps in sanctions as 'behaviour is so good'.
- Pupils commented that name-calling does not happen. They say bullying in its various forms does not happen in school and they also demonstrate a good understanding of different types of bullying. There have been no exclusions for several years.
- The playground is well organised and structured with a wide range of equipment and activities for pupils to play and develop their skills. Pupils who have been trained to act as play leaders very skilfully support those pupils who sometimes do not have a friend to play with or who may have had a disagreement.
- Parents who have written to thank the school or who have completed the online questionnaire are very pleased with pupils' behaviour.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say that they feel safe: 'there is always someone there to help us,' a child told inspectors.
- Staff are appropriately trained in child protection. The school's well-planned curriculum ensures that pupils understand the importance of staying safe online, know what to do when the fire alarm sounds and know how to stay safe in school and when they go on school trips.
- Almost all parents who responded to the online questionnaire agreed that their child is safe in school.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching over time is outstanding. The inspection team agreed with the school's assessment of the quality of teaching; they saw evidence of rapid progress in pupils' books and in the detailed analysis of pupils' progress information held by the school.
- Learning is well structured and skilfully planned so that pupils make rapid progress in literacy, mathematics and reading. Skilful questioning enables adults to check pupils' learning regularly and adjust their teaching appropriately to ensure that all pupils learn effectively.
- Pupils agreed that they received help when they needed it. They also said that they appreciate the humour that teachers use to make learning fun: 'They make learning fun as it helps us to remember things.'
- Teachers deploy teaching assistants very well to work with pupils who require additional support. Working in small groups or one to one, teaching assistants skilfully re-teach knowledge or skills so that these pupils catch up and the progress of all pupils in the class is rapid.
- The school has very effective systems for ensuring pupils know what they have to do to improve and make more progress. Teachers give pupils very useful feedback on how they can improve their work. In a small number of classes pupils would benefit from having more time to respond to and act upon feedback to enable additional progress to be made.
- Work is closely matched to the needs of pupils. In a lesson focusing on punctuating speech, the teacher's very good knowledge of the pupils ensured that groups were given different tasks to complete. This ensures that all groups of pupils make very good progress from their different starting points.

- The school has a very effective system for tracking the progress that pupils make and identifying areas where they need to improve. Teachers then plan lessons which focus learning on skills and knowledge that pupils need to improve and develop. This process enables pupils to make very good progress.
- Homework, in every year group, is well organised and closely linked to learning in school. Pupils benefit from the activities that are planned to consolidate learning.
- A very large majority of parents who either spoke to the inspectors during the inspection or responded to the online questionnaire agree that their child is being well taught.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- It is clear from evidence in lessons, in pupils' books and from an analysis of the school's progress data that pupils make outstanding progress in all year groups. The standards reached by pupils when they leave the school are much higher than national averages in all subject areas. Pupils at the school are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The school sets very high rates of progress targets for the pupils in each year group. These aspirational targets for progress, alongside hard-working pupils, very effective teaching and strong support at home, ensure that pupils' progress regularly exceeds national averages in all year groups.
- The progress made by the small number of pupils eligible to receive the pupil premium is very good. It is the same and often better than all other pupils in the school. The standard reached by these pupils is close to or better than all pupils nationally. However, despite the wide range of strategies that the school has put into place to enable pupils entitled to the pupil premium to catch up there is still a gap in the standards achieved by these pupils in reading, writing and mathematics when compared to all other pupils in the school. Recently, the gaps have narrowed, particularly in writing. In mathematics, the attainment of those pupils eligible for the pupil premium is two terms behind that of all other pupils in Year 6. In reading, attainment is four terms behind and in writing attainment is one term behind.
- As more able pupils are given tasks that are appropriate for their ability, their progress is very good. Rates of progress of more able pupils are at least in line with and often better than the rates of progress made by other pupils.
- The support given to those pupils who attend alternative provision, who are disabled and those who have special educational needs is very good and these pupils also make very effective progress.

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	109259
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	449362

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Gilchrist
Headteacher	Kate Wilkins
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 September 2010
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