

St Michael's C of E Junior School

Newton Road, Bath, BA2 1RW

Inspection dates 8–9 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The strong leadership of the headteacher, well supported by a much-improved governing body, has led to improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since the last inspection.
- The overall quality of teaching is good. Pupils say that they enjoy their work and their books provide evidence of the pride they have in this.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and promote learning opportunities well.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics has risen since the previous inspection.
- Pupils' good behaviour makes a strong contribution to their successful learning.
- This is a caring school. The Lodge gives support to those who need additional help or a fresh start to their education.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in the school. They are aware of the different types of bullying and know what to do should it occur.
- Pupils show respect for each other and adults; this is because respect and care are central to the school's values. This is well supported by the school's motto, 'Working together for the best'. These aspects relate well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and help prepare pupils well for the future.
- The overwhelming majority of parents are very supportive of the school and are pleased with the education their children receive.
- Governors know the school well. They offer both support and challenge to help maintain the improving standards in all areas of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The progress that boys make in reading and writing is slower than that of the girls. Although the gap is closing rapidly, the standards they achieve are below those they achieve in mathematics.
- The most disadvantaged pupils do not make enough progress in reading.
- The feedback pupils receive on their work is not always acted upon.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of ten lessons taught by eight teachers. All of these were jointly observed with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors observed small groups of pupils taught by teaching assistants.
- Inspectors observed an assembly with parents in attendance.
- Inspectors heard a range of pupils from all year groups read and they also held meetings with two groups of pupils, including the school council.
- Inspectors were shown around the school by a group of pupils who spoke about their learning.
- Inspectors spoke to six governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority, the school's improvement partner and staff, including senior and middle leaders. They also spoke to the headteacher from Weston All Saints C of E Primary School, who has been working with the school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documents, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. Inspectors scrutinised the school's arrangements for spending the additional funding for sports and the pupil premium.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, to allow analysis. The school's own survey of parents conducted in October 2014 was taken into account. The inspectors also held informal discussions with parents at the start and end of the school day. The inspection team took account of responses to the staff questionnaire from 28 members of staff.

Inspection team

Sarah Jones, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Michael Buist

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This junior school is smaller than the national average for primary schools.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs is more than double the national average.
- More than half of pupils are supported by pupil premium (additional government funding which supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals). This is more than double the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- School leaders and staff have worked with Weston All Saints C of E Primary School, a school judged as outstanding, to help support improvements to the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils.
- The school is part of the South Bath Cluster of Schools Group, a group of 12 local schools working with and supporting each other to help raise standards.
- The school includes and manages a local authority eight-place resource base, referred to as The Lodge, for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD).
- The headteacher takes the lead for the Bath Behaviour and Attendance Panel, a group of 26 schools.
- The school provides a breakfast club that is managed by the governing body. The school also provides a number of after-school clubs which include sporting activities, art and a homework club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement by improving teaching so that it is outstanding overall by ensuring that:
 - further opportunities are available for pupils, particularly boys, to develop their reading and writing skills in a range of different subject areas
 - the most disadvantaged pupils make more progress in reading
 - all teachers apply the marking policy consistently and give pupils time to address their next steps in learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's strong leadership is significant in the improvements made since the previous inspection. As a result of this, along with support from the governing body and the local authority, there have been significant improvements. There is a culture of high expectations in teaching and pupils' achievements.
- Senior and middle leaders have worked effectively with the staff at Weston All Saints C of E Primary School. This has given staff the opportunity to share best practice and make improvements to both the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The headteacher, senior and middle leaders share a clear plan for the future. The school's own review of its performance has correctly identified areas for improvement and actions are in place to tackle the agreed priorities.
- The headteacher is supported well by the leadership team. Middle leaders in charge of subjects and the leader in charge of the provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make a positive impact to the quality of teaching and to pupils' progress. They regularly check on the quality of teaching and learning, look at pupils' work and encourage staff to share ideas to further enhance the improvements made.
- The new approach to monitoring teachers' performance has been carefully considered with other headteachers within the South Bath Cluster of Schools Group. The process is rigorous and provides staff with opportunities for further training to help them improve teaching and management skills, as required.
- The school has developed a new system to assess pupils to accommodate the new approach to assessment. Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is methodically and regularly tracked and middle leaders are supporting teachers well in the early stages of this new system.
- The curriculum – the subjects pupils learn in the school – is good. Pupils have the opportunity to learn about new topics. Pupils describe their lessons as exciting and enjoy learning both in and out of the classroom. For example, they spoke with great enthusiasm about their work on the Romans and their visit to the Roman Baths; they also asked the inspector whether she knew why the water was green – they did. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills in different subjects.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Visits both locally, for example the seven-week residency exploring the city of Bath as part of the 'School without Walls' project, and beyond enable pupils to appreciate the diverse cultural heritage of modern Britain. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to the school as part of its values. Pupils benefit from lessons on life skills that include topics on money management, cooking and understanding an election process. They also benefit from working with pupils from other primary schools as part of a mathematics challenge day. Links with secondary schools are good, including an opportunity to take part in 'Bath taps into Science, by improving the local environment'. This helps support the transition to the next stage of their education.
- The school has a positive relationship with parents. One parent said the family had stayed in the area to ensure the youngest child could attend the school. Parents appreciate the regular communication, including the information available on the school website.
- The school is strongly committed to all pupils achieving well. The additional funding is used effectively to ensure disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to others in the school and disadvantaged pupils nationally. For example, funding is used for additional staffing to provide extra support for individuals and groups of pupils, mentoring and subsidising trips and other activities to ensure that all pupils are included.
- The school makes good use of the additional primary physical education and sport premium to promote fitness and healthy lifestyles and increase participation in sporting activities, including taking part in local tournaments such as hockey and netball. Specialist coaches work alongside teachers and pupils to extend and improve skills in a range of different sports such as dance. The sports coordinator meets regularly with sports leaders in other schools and with representatives from Bath rugby and cricket clubs to plan further opportunities to engage pupils in sporting activities.
- The local authority has provided support for the school including training for leaders, teachers and governors. It has confidence in the headteacher that the school is now well placed to continue to improve.
- The school fosters positive relations; there is no discrimination and the school is committed to equal opportunities for all pupils. Pupils in The Lodge are well integrated into the main school as part of the school's inclusion policy.
- The school's arrangements to safeguard pupils are good and meet statutory requirements to make sure that all pupils are well cared for.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body has a clear idea of the school's strengths and areas for further development. Governors bring a range of expertise to the school and are aware of the school's priorities. Governors have a good understanding of the data on pupils' achievement and provide both challenge and support to make sure the improvement continues.
- Governors make sure that the school finances are managed well. For example, they ensure that the school is using both the pupil premium and additional sports funding to improve pupils' overall achievement.
- Some governors have observed teaching and they have a good insight into the quality of teaching. They have a clear understanding of teachers' performance and implementation of the national Teachers' Standards in relation to rewarding good teaching and tackling any underperformance.
- Governors attend training to ensure they know what is expected of them. Statutory requirements such as safeguarding are fully in place and effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy school, have a good attitude to learning and work hard.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and describe the school as a family. Pupils are very welcoming to visitors and want to talk about their experiences in the classroom and the visits that they really enjoy, for example, their visit to Cheddar Gorge as part of their Stone Age work.
- There are robust systems for monitoring pupils' behaviour, and school records indicate that poor behaviour has reduced over time. A very small minority of pupils from The Lodge present some challenging behaviour. Any incidents are managed well, and this is helped by the calm inclusive environment the school has created.
- The school council spoke about their recent involvement in the review of school lunches, as part of the refurbishment of the school kitchen. A large proportion of pupils now have a school lunch. They enjoy the choice of food and particularly enjoy 'Fish Friday'.
- The additional primary physical education and sport premium has been used to train Year 6 pupils as young sports leaders. They lead some activities to support other pupils in their physical education lessons.
- The school has worked hard and effectively with parents to improve pupils' attendance and it is now in line with that seen nationally.
- There has been one permanent exclusion in the last three years.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The vast majority of parents who responded to the school's survey agreed that their child felt safe at school.
- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying such as name calling and cyber-bullying. They say that sometimes there is a little bit of bullying, but it is dealt with quickly by adults. One pupil described the school as 'a happy school'.
- Pupils have good understanding of possible unsafe situations and how to keep themselves safe both in and out of school. Pupils are confident that they know how to keep themselves safe when working with computers online. They say they are given clear instructions to inform an adult if they have any concerns.
- The school is open to pupils from 8:00am. This gives pupils the opportunity to engage with the early activities arranged by the school or to attend the breakfast club. This provides a safe and healthy start to the school day.
- Pupils enjoy the activities on offer in the after-school clubs, with some clubs organised by the pupils and supervised by adults.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good in all areas and this helps pupils to make good progress. Pupils are clear about their learning in lessons and contribute well at the end when they review what they have learnt and what they need to do to deepen their understanding.
- There are a range of resources available to support pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Year 5 made good use of the displays in the classroom to help them work on fractions.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and want to do well. They take a pride in their work and present their work

neatly. They enjoy the challenges presented to them and would like even more.

- Many teaching assistants work with pupils of different abilities and make a good contribution to pupils' learning. They effectively question pupils' understanding and provide additional explanations where necessary to further support the learning of the pupils they are working with. This includes pupils from The Lodge who are included in many whole-school classes.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are both supportive and respectful. Pupils have the confidence to ask for help if they are experiencing difficulties.
- There are opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy and literacy skills in other subjects. This was observed in a Year 4 lesson when pupils were creating a range of questions they wanted to find out about their new topic on North America. However, pupils do not always have opportunities to develop these skills in other subjects.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported in lessons.
- Teachers regularly assess pupils' understanding by skilfully questioning pupils to gauge their understanding in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers' marking tells pupils very clearly how well they have done. However, pupils do not always respond to the suggestions made.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well from their different starting points. Teachers ensure that work is interesting and this helps pupils learn well.
- In the national tests, pupils in Year 6 continue to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The outcomes at the end of 2014 were the best the school has ever achieved.
- Teachers make sure that the checks they make on pupils' progress are accurate by working with other teachers in the school and with other schools in the South Bath Cluster of Schools Group.
- The most able pupils make rapid progress. The proportion of pupils achieving the highest levels in mathematics by the end of Year 6 has continued to rise.
- Pupils' achievement in the grammar, punctuation and spelling assessment has rapidly improved as a result of targeted support and further opportunities to develop writing in a wide range of subject areas.
- Pupils read with confidence and use their understanding of letters and the sounds they make when reading. Pupils are encouraged to read daily and enjoy the wide range of books available to them. Pupils are also encouraged to read using different media; for example, one pupil chose to read from her electronic tablet when asked to read to an inspector.
- The progress boys make in some classes is slower in their reading and writing. The school is addressing this well through English with topics, resources and books to capture their interest. As a result the gap is beginning to close. However, opportunities for boys to develop these aspects more fully in other subject areas are less developed.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points. Good support is provided by both class teachers and teaching assistants. This ensures the work is set at the right level for them to make progress alongside their classmates.
- The attainment of the most disadvantaged pupils (those supported by the pupil premium) at the end of Year 6 was similar to that of other pupils in the school in mathematics. However, they were around one-and-a-half terms behind in writing and two-and-a-half terms behind in reading. Compared to disadvantaged pupils nationally, their attainment was broadly similar in mathematics and writing, and two terms behind for reading.
- Pupils from The Lodge, some of whom join the school at other than the usual times, quickly settle and make good 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	109155
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	453773

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Gilmour
Headteacher	David Goucher
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 January 2013
Telephone number	01225 421888
Fax number	01225 481617
Email address	stmichaels_jun@bathnes.gov.uk

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