

The Minster Church of England Primary School

Emwell Street, Warminster, Wiltshire, BA12 8JA

Inspection dates 24–25 February 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher's ambition and drive for excellence underpin the good and continuously improving education provided by the school.
- Pupils' achievement throughout the school is good and improving rapidly. By the time pupils leave Year 6, they achieve standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, with some that is outstanding. Lessons are typically interesting and challenge pupils of all abilities.
- Positive working relationships exist between adults and pupils, based on a culture of mutual respect.
- Children in the Reception class receive a good start to their education because exciting activities stimulate their interest in learning.
- Pupils feel safe in school because adults provide high quality guidance and support.
- Pupils' behaviour, in and out of lessons, is impeccable. Pupils work hard and show a zest for learning.
- A strong curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as well as providing memorable experiences in music and physical education.
- Governors are very knowledgeable and have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They work closely with school leaders to make a strong contribution to whole-school improvement.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils are punctual as they enjoy coming to school.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's work. They are invited into school regularly and value the opportunities to be involved in their children's education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) is not yet strong enough to ensure that pupils make outstanding progress.
- Not all senior and middle leaders are fully aware of how well groups of pupils are learning in their areas of responsibility.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed one act of collective worship, play and lunchtime behaviour, and visited 14 lessons or parts of lessons, three of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, an inspector listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings and discussions with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teachers, support staff, pupils and three members of the governing body. A telephone discussion took place with a representative from the local authority.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised which included school improvement plans, work in pupils' books, checks on pupils' achievement, minutes from meetings, safeguarding information and documents relating to the setting of targets for teachers.
- Inspectors took into account informal discussions with parents and the views of 47 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Questionnaire responses from 24 members of staff were also analysed.

Inspection team

Dale Burr, Lead inspector

Seconded Inspector

Richard Johnson, Team inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. A very small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below the national average. This additional funding is for pupils who are eligible for free school meals or those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is above the national average. There are no disabled pupils at the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum standards set for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- Early years provision in the Reception class is full time.
- The school provides a breakfast club for pupils.
- The headteacher is a mentor for new headteachers in the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and achievement in phonics by:
 - ensuring staff have an equally good knowledge of the teaching of phonics, including how to model the correct pronunciation of sounds
 - providing frequent opportunities for pupils to use their knowledge of phonics to improve the quality and accuracy of their writing
 - sharing best practice in the teaching of phonics.
- Strengthen the work of senior and middle leaders so that they have a greater impact across the whole school by:
 - ensuring they have a more precise understanding of the progress different groups of pupils make
 - using progress information to identify and support groups of pupils who are at risk of underachieving.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The strong leadership of the headteacher is the driving force behind improved teaching and raised achievement. She provides a clear direction, which is supported by all staff and governors. Her highly focused yet supportive approach has created a united team that is fully committed to moving the school forward.
- Relationships throughout the school are excellent. Pupils are happy and confident learners because adults provide a secure and caring atmosphere in which to learn. Pupils display excellent manners and flawless behaviour which contribute well to the progress they make.
- Senior and middle leaders share the headteacher's high expectations. For example, the curriculum leader frequently checks teachers' planning to ensure there are relevant links between subjects, including the involvement of parents and the community. However, not all leaders are skilled in driving improvements in their areas of responsibility.
- The curriculum is rich and provides exceptionally well for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils enjoy celebrating festivals and special events, such as Holi, Remembrance Day and Chinese New Year. A comprehensive programme of assemblies celebrates the school's distinctive Christian values as well as developing a growing awareness of fundamental British values of democracy and tolerance.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of, and respect for, differences between people. Pupils understand the diverse make-up of modern Britain and this helps ensure that no discrimination takes place. The school treats pupils equally, regardless of their abilities or circumstances. An older pupil commented, 'We may be different people but we are all equals.'
- Music provision, including instrumental teaching and a choir, is impressive. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their musical talents. For example, the choir has developed excellent links in the community by performing locally and nationally, including at The Royal Albert Hall. These and other experiences enhance pupils' strong cultural and spiritual development.
- The school uses the primary school physical education and sport funding exceptionally well to promote high quality physical education and sport. The subject leader has targeted funding well to support staff development and to introduce new sports. Pupils frequently take part in competitive events and enjoy notable success in swimming, netball and cross-country running. Pupils told the inspector that they pursue more sports in their own time because of the school's encouragement to develop a healthy lifestyle and take part in physical activity.
- Parents are highly appreciative of all that the school provides. They told the inspectors about the daily visibility of the headteacher and the approachability of teachers, which they regard as particular strengths. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school through fundraising and attending school events. In the words of one parent, 'I could not have dreamt of a better school for my children.'
- The school makes good use of the local authority's support to confirm the accuracy of its self-evaluation. The local authority sees the expertise of the headteacher as very effective; she supports new headteachers in sharing best practice.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance of the school is strong and ambitious. Governors have an accurate and detailed knowledge of the school's strengths, including what needs to improve. They regularly visit the school to check for themselves how well the pupils are achieving.
 - Governors work closely with the headteacher to ensure that the quality of teaching has high importance throughout the school. Governors challenge leaders about the school's performance by analysing pupil data. They ensure that decisions about teachers' pay take account of performance and responsibilities. Governors know how good performance is rewarded and how to tackle underperformance.
 - Governors use their expertise to support a strategic role, for example they manage finances well and make decisions which benefit school improvement priorities. They ensure the expert use of additional funding, such as the pupil premium, and regularly check to assess its impact on improving results for specific groups of pupils.
 - Safeguarding arrangements are effective and meet statutory guidance. Governors are proactive in ensuring that the school site is as secure as possible, for example by installing additional gates to control access.
 - Governors communicate clear vision and commitment to parents through termly newsletters. They check that the school regularly updates its website with the required statutory information.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The school insists on the very highest standards of behaviour; all pupils know and understand these expectations well. Adults promote positive relationships which help pupils behave equally well in lessons and during social time.
- Pupils in Year 6 take responsibility seriously through their various roles such as head boy and head girl, sports ambassadors and mentors. They wear their badges with enormous pride and set a good example for their peers. These opportunities help prepare them for the next stage in their education.
- The school's detailed record keeping show that incidents of inappropriate behaviour are rare and that it deals with any concerns swiftly. Teachers and teaching assistants share the same high expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) strongly agree that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and continues to improve as the school works well with parents to promote regular attendance. The school has effective and robust procedures in place to deal with any absence.
- An older pupil told an inspector that bullying does not exist and said, 'We are one big family who look after each other.' Pupils are entirely confident that, should bullying occur, adults in school would respond quickly to any concerns. Pupils know about the different types of bullying, including physical, racial and cyber-bullying.
- Pupils learn about keeping safe through lessons. They understand how to keep safe on the internet, on the road and in the event of a fire. Pupils learn regularly about common dangers, particularly those related to safety on the school premises.
- The school gives high priority to pupils' safety. Staff have an excellent understanding of how to keep pupils safe; regular training ensures they are knowledgeable about the school's safety policies and procedures. Safe practice extends to the breakfast club which provides a secure and caring place to start the day.

The quality of teaching is good

- Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and respectful. The pupils' exceptionally positive attitudes and outstanding behaviour enhance the school's well-established climate for learning.
- The school's records and work in pupils' books show that the quality of teaching is consistently good and sometimes better. In typical lessons, teachers ask probing questions and have high expectations of all pupils. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils were challenged to explain their mathematical reasoning based on a secure knowledge of calculation facts.
- Teachers plan exciting activities which motivate pupils to learn. They regularly check pupils' achievements to ensure that tasks match their needs well. Teaching assistants effectively support pupils' learning so that all pupils make equally good progress.
- The teaching of writing is good. A focus in the last year has led to improvements in the quality of pupils' writing. Teachers' marking and feedback provide good guidance on what pupils need to do to improve their work; the presentation of pupils' writing is strongest in Years 4 to 6.
- Pupils enjoy reading and standards are high. Staff promote reading well across subjects and pupils have regular opportunities to read to adults in school. However, not all adults have an equally good knowledge of how to pronounce accurately the sounds that letters make and or correct pupils when they mispronounce sounds; this hinders progress for some pupils.
- Progression in mathematics is evident from work in pupils' books. Well-used classroom displays promote mathematical vocabulary and support pupils' learning. Pupils have regular opportunities to develop their understanding using practical resources. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils consolidated their knowledge of fractions by exploring equivalence through cutting and matching parts of shapes.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The standards pupils reach by the end of Year 6 are typically above average. In 2014, a greater proportion of pupils made good progress in reading and mathematics. Over time, not enough of the most-able pupils exceed good progress in writing; however, work seen in pupils' books and the school's own progress information demonstrate that achievement for this group is increasing.
- Achievement in reading is good. Pupils have daily access to a range of high quality literature. However, the results of the Year 1 national phonics check are typically average; not enough pupils make outstanding progress because the teaching of phonics is not as effective as it should be.
- Most children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities typical for their age. In 2014, from similar starting points, all pupils reached or exceeded the expected level in reading at the end of Year 2, and a very large majority did so in writing and mathematics. This represents good achievement over time.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is well led and managed and helps ensure they achieve well. Any pupils at risk of falling behind receive additional, appropriate and timely support.
- The small number of disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their different starting points. In 2014, Year 6 disadvantaged pupils were two and a half terms behind other pupils in the school, and two terms behind other pupils nationally in reading. In writing, they were one term behind other pupils in the school and other pupils nationally. In mathematics, they were one and a half terms behind other pupils in the school, and one term behind other pupils nationally. Gaps between these pupils' attainment and others in the school continue to close. A recent letter from the Minister of State for Schools recognised the school's success in supporting disadvantaged pupils to achieve well.
- Teachers give the most-able pupils challenging work, which makes them think and work hard. For example, in a Year 4 English lesson, pupils confidently explained when and where to place commas in relation to subordinate clauses. More of the most-able pupils than previously are on track to reach the highest Level 6 at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The very few pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress, particularly in mathematics. They benefit from well-targeted specialist support.

The early years provision is good

- In most years, the majority of children start Reception with well-developed personal and social skills. They make good progress in all areas of learning, especially speaking, because adults encourage children to communicate in full sentences. A much higher proportion of children are on track to achieve a good level of development than in the previous year.
- The Reception class is well led and managed. Adults work as a strong team and plan an imaginative range of activities based on children's interests and ideas. For example, in the outdoor area, children eagerly became detectives, packed their rucksack and went on a 'dinosaur adventure'. Interesting themes and topics contribute strongly to children's motivation to learn.
- Teaching in the Reception class is good. The thoughtfully designed classroom gives children access to all areas of learning. Good use is made of the school's facilities to make learning relevant. For example, children learned about seasonal changes and explored the school grounds to find evidence of spring.
- Phonics teaching helps children enjoy reading. However, not all lessons provide enough opportunities for children to use their knowledge of sounds to help write words and sentences.
- Children's individual learning journeys (information from ongoing checks on their progress) contain a wide range of photographs and written comments from adults. Contributions from parents enhance their importance as a complete record of children's achievements.
- Children behave exceptionally well in the Reception class because adults place significant importance on children's social and moral development. Adults and children are respectful and courteous towards each other, and create a safe and harmonious environment in which learning thrives. Staff promote safe practices well in all activities, including when children are using the outdoor equipment.
- At the end of their Reception Year, children are well prepared for Year 1; most parents agree that children 'get the best possible start' at The Minster.

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	126368
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	448596

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alex Brennan
Headteacher	Lisa Tudor
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2010
Telephone number	01985 213265
Fax number	01985 847187
Email address	admin@minster.wilts.sch.uk

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