

Brent Knoll Church of England Primary School

Brent Street, Brent Knoll, Highbridge, Somerset, TA9 4EQ

Inspection dates 18–19 March 2015

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | 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 |
| Early years provision | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The calm and quietly determined leadership of the new headteacher has united the staff and improved teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Subject leaders share the determination and drive of senior leaders. They have a clear focus on improving teaching and learning in their subjects and provide effective support for staff.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They inspire and motivate pupils with well-planned activities.
- Pupils' achievement is improving. A high proportion of pupils are currently making rapid progress and achieving well.
- Children in the early years do well because adults provide them with good care and support.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and often exemplary in the older classes.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive; they ensure that pupils feel safe and secure and love coming to school.
- The curriculum is well planned and enables pupils to develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in life in modern Britain.
- Governance is strong. Governors are supportive of the school and routinely challenge leaders. As a result, the school is rapidly improving.
- The school works well with parents. The overwhelming majority of parents are very supportive of the school and are pleased with the education and care their children receive.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not do as well in mathematics as they do in reading and writing. This is because teachers do not always use checks on learning effectively to find and address gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- Work set for the most-able pupils does not always challenge them to make rapid progress.
- Some learning assistants do not support pupils' learning effectively in lessons.

Information about this inspection

- Pupils' learning was observed in 11 lessons or parts of lessons, all of which were seen jointly with the headteacher. Observations were also made of the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make).
- Pupils' English and mathematics books were scrutinised to establish the quality of their work. The inspector listened to Year 2 pupils reading and discussed reading with a group of Year 6 pupils.
- The inspector also spoke to pupils during lessons, lunchtimes and playtimes and a group of pupils discussed their views about the school.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the early years leader, the mathematics and special needs leaders, six members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, the minutes of the governing body meetings, records of lesson observations and the management of staff performance, information on pupils' progress, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Account was taken of the 39 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the school's own survey. The inspector also spoke to parents before school in the playground. Questionnaires were returned by 18 members of staff, whose views were also considered.

Inspection team

Joyce Cox, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school with four mixed-aged classes and a Year 6 class.
- Nearly all pupils are from a White British background. A very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and traveller backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is much lower than the national average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible to receive free school meals and those in local authority care. In 2014, very few pupils were eligible to receive the additional funding in Year 2 and Year 6.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- Children in the early years are taught in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class. They attend school full time.
- The number of pupils on roll has risen steadily since the last inspection. However, there are often more pupils in the younger age groups than in Year 5 and Year 6. This is because a significant proportion of pupils leave at the end of Year 4 to transfer to a local middle school.
- In the school year ending summer 2013, there were only four pupils in Year 6. There were 12 pupils in the 2013 to 2014 Year 6 cohort. The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school part-way through the year is higher than average.
- The school met the government's current floor standards in 2014, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the school's previous inspection, there have been substantial staff changes. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher, along with two long-term supply teachers and a teaching assistant, have left the school.
- There has been a restructuring of both the senior leadership team and the governing body. A new headteacher took up his post in April 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently use checks on learning to swiftly establish gaps in pupils' learning
 - gaps in learning are addressed as quickly as possible.
- Improve teaching so that it is typically outstanding and raise pupils' achievement by ensuring:
 - tasks always provide an appropriate level of challenge, especially for the most-able pupils
 - teaching assistants are deployed effectively so that they provide maximum support in all lessons.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and shows considerable ambition and steely determination to improve the school. He has developed a committed and united team of key leaders and staff after a turbulent time with several staff changes. He has the full respect and confidence of the staff, pupils and parents.
- Through systematic and thorough self-review, leaders have an accurate overview of the school's strengths and areas to develop. The headteacher has also introduced effective ways to measure pupils' progress, raised staff's expectations and maintained pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes. Decisive and positive action has been taken to strengthen teaching and to raise pupils' achievement which has been successful.
- Middle leaders of English, mathematics, inclusion and early years are effective. They are fully engaged in checking pupils' attainment and progress and work hard to improve their areas of responsibility. Good progress is being made in implementing new assessment arrangements to reflect changes nationally.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching and learning regularly and good plans are in place to involve the local authority advisor in lesson observations. Arrangements for teachers' performance management help to improve the quality of teaching because targets for development are focused on all pupils making good or better progress.
- Effective training has been provided to improve teachers' skills in the teaching of mathematics, phonics and physical education. New appointments are well managed and have further enhanced teaching and learning in the school.
- The headteacher and all staff have created a positive and very welcoming atmosphere where all pupils can learn well and thrive. All statutory requirements for safeguarding are met and these are effective. Adults ensure that pupils are well behaved and safe. Consequently, pupils say they feel very secure and that 'teachers always have our best interests at heart'.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Values such as love of learning, respect, faith and partnership are successfully fostered in all classes and these promote good relationships. Pupils show an appreciation and a good understanding of different cultures, social backgrounds and faiths and are well prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, they enjoy fortnightly visits from a local Free Church leader who shares stories about his West Indian heritage and London background.
- A broad and interesting range of subjects enables pupils to achieve well and contributes successfully to their personal development. Pupils and parents enjoy the additional activities provided now, such as clubs, sport and educational visits.
- Most parents are very happy with what the school provides. Many spoke positively about the headteacher and praised the recent changes for the better that he has introduced.
- All pupils have full access to the learning activities provided, ensuring equality of opportunity for all, which is one of the school's main objectives. All forms of discrimination are tackled. Parents are very appreciative of the way staff care for their children. Several told the inspector that their child had not enjoyed their previous schools but have quickly settled at Brent Knoll and cannot wait to get there every day.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to provide disadvantaged pupils with additional support in reading, writing and mathematics. This funding and effective support are having a good impact on pupils' achievement.
- The additional primary school physical education and sport funding is used very well to extend pupils' physical development and to buy new equipment. Specialist sports coaches are employed to provide good skills teaching and to help increase staff expertise. The headteacher, much to the pupils' delight, has set up many more lunchtime and after-school sports clubs. Boys and girls are much more involved in football, netball and tag rugby leagues and tournaments against other schools.
- The local authority has plans to provide on-going support and training to help the school improve even more.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors share the new headteacher's high ambitions for the pupils and staff. They know exactly what is going on in the school and what needs to be done to improve. They have a very accurate view of the school's future development and they offer a wide range of skills and expertise. For example, one governor is a mathematics advisor and is providing considerable knowledge and practical support to improve pupils' mathematical achievement and attainment.
 - From their own monitoring and clear understanding of data, governors are also able to challenge

leaders. They are very aware of how much progress different groups of pupils are making and where there needs to be more improvement. They keep a close eye on the school's budget and know how effectively pupil premium funding is being spent.

- Governors know the quality of teaching and what is being done to improve it. They are fully involved in decisions on rewarding good teaching. They ensure the correct use of all funds and make sure that all statutory requirements are met. Governors keep a careful check on the improvement and rates of progress being made by all pupils at every full governing body meeting.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils say that they enjoy school and speak with enthusiasm about the many activities, in lessons and after school, which the staff now provide. Typical comments include, 'We love maths fun sessions as they really help us learn our times tables and think quickly.'
- In some classes, older pupils show exemplary attitudes to learning and behave extremely well. This is particularly so when pupils are inspired and engaged in their work. Just very occasionally, a small number of pupils misbehave when the teaching does not fully engage and challenge them.
- Pupils say that behaviour in the playground and on the field is 'mostly good'. Arguments and minor disagreements can arise during break-time football matches. However, pupils report that having the headteacher to referee these occasions has improved the situation.
- Pupils are friendly, polite and show consideration and respect for others, and they have a good understanding of different cultures and faiths. They endeavour to live by one of the school's core values which is to be understanding of each other's differences. One pupil commented, 'It would be very dull if we were all the same.'
- Pupils willingly and conscientiously take on additional roles such as being school councillors, Eco-warriors and supporting younger children. They raise considerable funds for local, national and global charities and understand the importance of helping others less fortunate than themselves.
- Attendance levels are monitored rigorously and there is zero tolerance of families taking holidays during term time. Consequently, attendance is improving and is now just above average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Almost all parents who responded to the online survey or spoke to the inspector stated that their child felt safe at school and that they were well looked after. Inspection findings support these positive views.
- The headteacher, staff and governors take effective steps to ensure that all pupils are well cared for and protected. There are effective systems for checking and recording safety matters. This ensures that any concerns are dealt with promptly. All staff are appropriately checked before being appointed to the school.
- Pupils say they feel very safe at school and show a clear understanding of bullying and the different forms it can take. Discussions with pupils and the school's records of incidents confirm that bullying in the school is very rare. This is because pupils are very respectful to others and as pupils told the inspector, 'The headteacher is really good at sorting out any minor disputes about football. arguments.'
- The headteacher and staff carry out regular risk assessments and ensure that the school is a safe place for all pupils. Positive relationships are established between staff and pupils who know they can turn to trusted adults if they are worried. One parent said, 'The headteacher and staff care very deeply for each and every child in this school.'

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good over time and, consequently, pupils learn well and make good progress. Work in pupils' books, as well as checks carried out by senior leaders and evidence gathered during the inspection, substantiate good teaching and learning. The new curriculum provides staff with clear guidance on what pupils are expected to learn and greatly assists their planning
- Most teachers plan lessons carefully to immediately engage and interest pupils of all abilities. A group of older pupils said, 'Teachers are lovely, they are really good at their job.' Clear explanations and skilful questioning ensure that most pupils build on previous learning and achieve well.
- The teaching of reading has always been one of the school's strengths. Younger pupils say they enjoy reading and use their phonic skills well to work out new words. Older pupils love completing the 'Reading

Genres' challenge where they have to read a selection of books from different genres which skilfully extends their knowledge of books and authors.

- The teaching of mathematics is improving and pupils are making good progress in this subject. However, some pupils still have gaps in their mathematical knowledge due to ineffective teaching in the past. Teachers are not always rigorous in the checks they make and so these gaps are not always addressed quickly. Teachers are provided with clear guidance on how to develop pupils' writing skills throughout the school. Writing is increasingly linked to other subjects so that pupils can build on their existing knowledge and vocabulary in subjects such as history.
- Homework is set and marked regularly and linked to classroom learning. Teachers' marking is good in English and mathematics and clearly tells pupils what they do well and how they can improve. Many teaching assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning but there are some occasions when they do not engage sufficiently well with the pupils to support their learning.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Information on achievement and pupils' current work confirm that most pupils are making good progress to reach above average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Recent improvements in teaching and increased staff expectations of the progress pupils should make are leading to more pupils reaching above average standards.
- Although standards dipped in mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2014, work in books and school records show that current Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics in 2015.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2014 was above the national average. Current school information and pupils' work suggest that Key Stage 1 pupils continue to make good progress.
- Patterns in the standards pupils reach are distorted by the small number of pupils in some year groups and by the fact that several of the most-able pupils leave at the end of Year 4 to go to a local middle school.
- Pupils' additional learning needs are quickly identified by teachers and the new special needs leader makes sure that effective support is provided swiftly. Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same good progress as their peers, as do the very small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and traveller backgrounds.
- There are too few pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding to comment on their attainment without identifying them. The school identifies their requirements accurately and swiftly puts effective support in place so that they progress as well as their peers in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most-able pupils often achieve well, especially in reading. However, they are not always challenged sufficiently in their learning and they do not always attain the highest levels in writing and especially in mathematics.

The early years provision

is good

- Children make good progress in their Reception year. Most enter the school with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age, though some children entered below this in some year groups. In 2014, an above average number of children achieved a good level of development at the end of Reception and were well prepared for work in Year 1.
- The early years provision is well led and managed by the senior teacher who is constantly seeking to improve. She ensures that assessments are regular and accurate and that children's learning is planned effectively. She effectively supports the newly qualified Reception teacher and makes sure that children's achievements are recorded meticulously and show good progress.
- Attractive learning journals charting children's achievement in all the areas of learning are shared with parents, who feel very involved in their children's learning. They particularly enjoy celebrating their children's achievements out of school using the 'wow' display in the classroom.
- The quality of teaching is good and there is a strong focus on developing children's language and personal and social skills. Adults consistently model polite and courteous behaviour. Consequently, relationships are very positive; most children behave well, work hard and try to do their best.
- Children are kept very safe and enjoy playing in their outdoor area. They behave well, but on a few occasions their outdoor activities become over boisterous and lack structure or purpose. This is because

adults do not intervene sufficiently well to enhance their learning and play and this is why the provision is not yet outstanding.

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

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| Unique reference number | 123808 |
| Local authority | Somerset |
| Inspection number | 453360 |

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

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| 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 | 125 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Eur Ing Hugh Mackay JP |
| Headteacher | Chris Burman |
| Date of previous school inspection | 10–11 May 2011 |
| Telephone number | 01278 760546 |
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