

Nunney First School

Catch Road, Nunney, Frome, Somerset, BA11 4NE

Inspection dates 29–30 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Early years provision		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Pupils' achievement is inadequate. They do not make enough progress, especially in basic literacy and mathematical skills, as they move through the school.
- Over time, too much weak teaching has resulted in pupils not making enough progress. Consequently, pupils, including some of the most able, do not achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- Teaching is inadequate. Teachers, especially temporary supply teachers, when used in both classes, do not establish a secure grasp of what pupils already know and understand. As a result, they do not plan effectively for what pupils need to learn next.
- Often, the work set for the pupils in all parts of the school is either too easy or too hard or fails to stimulate pupils' interest. As a result, past underachievement is not rectified quickly enough.
- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement. Some pupils do not sustain concentration and are over-reliant on adult help to complete their work.
- The early years provision is inadequate. Children are not offered the good quality of teaching and stimulating experiences they need to achieve well.
- Leadership and management are inadequate. There are weaknesses at all levels of leadership, especially in checking the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress.
- Leaders, including governors, have not taken the decisive action needed to bring about lasting improvements in leadership, teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.
- The leaders and managers of the school do not demonstrate the capacity to improve.
- Teaching assistants are not always used effectively to support pupils' learning.

The school has the following strengths:

- Arrangements to ensure pupils are kept safe are good. As a result, pupils feel secure.
- The school is a welcoming community where learning in the expressive arts and through outdoor pursuits strongly promotes the pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- Parents and their children appreciate the caring relationships provided by the adults who work at the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported. Pupils with very complex needs are looked after extremely well. As a result, they make better progress than others.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector looked at pupils' learning in 15 lessons and observed three teachers. These visits also included observing teaching assistants working with individual pupils and small groups. The headteacher accompanied the inspector for several of these observations.
- The inspector looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects and classes. He talked to pupils about their work. He observed a group of Year 2 pupils reading and listened to individual pupils from Reception and Year 1 read.
- The inspector also talked to pupil members of the school council to take account of their views about the school.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including systems for checking progress, records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures and the school's analysis of how well it is doing and how it plans to improve.
- Records of checks on the quality of teaching were examined along with records of visits to the school made by the local authority.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, school staff and groups of pupils. Individual pupils were spoken to in lessons and around the school. The inspector held two telephone conversations with representatives of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the views expressed in 20 online responses to the Parent View questionnaire and informal meetings with parents at the school during the inspection. The inspector also considered the views expressed in a parent's letter.
- The inspector also took account of the results of 10 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Alexander Baxter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Nunney First School is much smaller than the average-sized first school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly average. A few pupils have complex needs.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is broadly average. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils, in this school, known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Pupils have been taught in two mixed-age classes since September 2014.
- Children of reception age attend the school on a full-time basis in a mixed class that also provides for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Other pupils are taught in a mixed Year 3 and 4 class.
- The village pre-school shares the school site. This is managed independently and was not part of this inspection.
- The school runs its own breakfast club on Tuesdays and Fridays.
- There have been many changes in staffing and governance since the previous inspection. This year supply teachers have been employed to cover long-term staff absence in both classes. Currently, a supply teacher is job-sharing with the headteacher in the Reception and Years 1 and 2 class.
- The number of pupils on roll has fallen by around one third since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve and secure at least good teaching by ensuring that all teachers, including in the early years provision:
 - take greater responsibility for analysing the pupils' developing skills and use this information to plan and set work that is hard enough for all pupils to make good progress
 - strengthen the teaching of basic literacy and particularly mathematical skills so that pupils, including the most able, can improve their writing and ability to solve mathematical problems
 - make more consistent and effective use of teaching assistants to support pupils' learning when they are working with the whole class
 - improve the quality of marking so that it always helps pupils to improve their work.
- Quicken pupils' progress in writing and mathematics and raise their achievement by:
 - securing raised, but realistic, expectations of what pupils should achieve and the amount of work they complete
 - improving pupils' spelling
 - improving pupils' behaviour for learning by making sure that they are stimulated and develop the determination and resilience to think and complete work for themselves.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - establishing an effective early years curriculum that enables children in Reception to experience a stimulating and well-balanced range of activities and learn well
 - leaders working more closely together and liaising better with other schools and the local authority to strengthen the way they undertake their duties and improve the quality of teaching and pupils' learning
 - ensuring that governors know the impact teaching has on pupils' progress, check more rigorously on the school's performance and hold leaders fully to account.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leadership and management are inadequate. This is because leaders, including governors, have not worked well enough together to improve pupils' achievement sufficiently and secure effective teaching since the school was previously inspected.
- Leaders have not established a culture where good teaching and behaviour can flourish and do not demonstrate the capacity to improve. At times, the headteacher has lacked effective support from the governing body and has not always sought or obtained additional help from the local authority or other schools.
- Leadership and management of the early years provision and of English and mathematics are inadequate. On various occasions since the previous inspection, during a continuing period of changes to staff and governors, the headteacher has striven to fulfil these and other middle leadership roles. Her leadership has not been successful, however, in securing improved teaching and achievement.
- The headteacher has introduced a system for tracking pupils' progress and this has helped to focus school development planning on the skills most in need of improvement. For example, this has secured effective use of pupil premium funding, including by providing extra adult help, which has improved pupils' reading. There has also been some improvement in the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) and in pupils' writing in Year 2.
- Over time, leaders, including governors, have not shown enough urgency in improving the quality of teaching and dealing with weak practice.
- The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- Leaders ensure that statutory safeguarding requirements are met. Staff and governors ensure that risks are assessed and that checks such as vetting the suitability of staff are fully completed and keep pupils safe.
- All those who work in the school promote a welcoming atmosphere. Pupils attending the breakfast club experience a happy start to the school day. Although staff are committed to promoting equality, this is compromised by the uneven quality of teaching and learning. Pupils' experience of learning differs too much from class to class such that some, for example those in Reception, are not helped to learn as well as others.
- Parents and carers interviewed by the inspector appreciate the way staff develop encouraging relationships with the pupils. Most parents support their children's reading at home effectively and a few parents give good support to pupils' reading in school. Parents' responses in the questionnaire are mostly positive, but reflect concerns, especially about the quality of leadership. A similarly large minority of staff indicated concerns about leadership in their questionnaires.
- The curriculum is inadequate because the development of pupils' literacy and mathematical skills is not planned or taught effectively and does not advance pupils' progress well enough. The early years curriculum for children does not provide the statutorily-required well-balanced range of activities to support their learning.
- The curriculum provides good activities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These include interesting opportunities for them to explore the natural world through outdoor pursuits such as gardening and working together in art, craft and music.
- The pupils' awareness of British values is promoted well in assemblies by helping them to understand what it means to be part of a caring community. Pupils elect classmates on to the school council and this helps them to learn about democracy. Links with a culturally diverse school in Bristol and visits from representatives of world faiths such as Sikhism further extend the pupils' preparation for life in modern Britain.
- The school provides good opportunities for sporting activities. It uses the primary school sports funding well, including employing a specialist coach to train staff in how to teach dance. The school also uses funding to widen the range of activities provided for the pupils and to increase their participation in sport. For example, pupils' attendance in the after-school multi-skills club has increased from eight to 20 this academic year.
- Communication between the school and the local authority has weakened in recent terms. As a result, the local authority has been ineffective in helping the school to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has not been effective in driving improvements, including in addressing the issues from the previous inspection, or in holding school leaders to account for pupils' achievement. This year,

following much change in the membership of the governing body, a new Chair of the Governing Body and new governors are striving to improve the way they support the school and check its performance. Governors have engaged well in recent training, particularly in safeguarding pupils. Governors do not have a clear enough picture of the quality of teaching and the impact it has on pupils' progress. They also acknowledge that they need further training in checking school and national data of pupils' progress in order to challenge the school's work effectively. Given much change to the governing body, the external review of governance which took place following the last inspection did not secure sufficient improvement in these areas. The governors and headteacher have not drawn up a new action plan or met with representatives of the local education authority as required by Her Majesty's Inspector earlier this year. As a result, governors do not have an accurate picture of the quality of teaching. They have updated checks of the headteacher's performance, but do not play an effective enough role in checking teachers' performance and in ensuring that good teaching is rewarded and underperformance tackled effectively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Most pupils listen carefully when teachers discuss the work that is expected of them.
- At times, a few pupils show an over-dependence on adults, choosing to wait for more help rather than thinking for themselves and concentrating on their work. Consequently, their behaviour for learning, in particular, requires improvement.
- When questioned, a majority of pupils on the school council and several others across the school said that they could work harder and that the work set for them was sometimes too easy.
- Pupils say they enjoy school, including when attending the breakfast club.
- Pupils behave well when they move about the school. Pupils show respect for adults and for each other's contributions in assemblies. For example, pupils showed genuine pleasure in achieving a good level of harmony when singing together.
- When interviewed, pupils on the school council demonstrated empathy and understanding about the breadth of cultures and faiths found across modern Britain. They talk knowledgeably about the need to show respect and tolerance of other people's views.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Leaders and managers ensure that safeguarding procedures are fully implemented.
- Parents, carers and the pupils themselves comment appreciatively on the good quality of care and supervision provided by the staff to make sure that everyone is kept safe at school.
- Pupils know what bullying is all about. They understand that it can take different forms, for example, racial and physical abuse. They also know about e-safety and how to use computers safely. Pupils say there is no bullying and, 'Everyone is friendly at this school.'
- Pupils know how to stay safe. At break and lunchtimes, pupils play amicably and show good awareness of each other's needs. For example, older pupils often check that all those who want to join in with ball games are able to do so.
- Attendance improved over the past year, but dipped during the spring term. Over time, attendance is slightly above the national average and reflects pupils' confidence in coming to school.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- The quality of teaching is inadequate and has declined since the previous inspection. Teaching has failed to ensure that pupils make enough progress to catch up on past underachievement.
- Evidence from work in pupils' books and discussions with staff and learners show that there has been too much variation in the quality of teaching over time, with too much that is weak and leads to inadequate progress for pupils.
- Continued instability in staffing since the previous inspection has also undermined periods of better teaching and pupils' progress. At different times, this has led to further underachievement.
- Teaching still fluctuates in quality across both classes and teachers frequently do not set work that is hard enough for pupils or enthuses them sufficiently. This is often the case in mathematics. As a result, some

pupils lose interest, including the most able, and do not work well enough.

- The quality of teachers' marking is also inconsistent. Pupils are sometimes given too little guidance and do not always respond well to help them make better progress.
- In recent terms, the headteacher and colleagues have introduced new approaches to teaching pupils' handwriting and checking pupils' progress. These are bringing improvement in some year groups in pupils' writing. However, leadership and support for other teaching staff has not been effective in firmly establishing these approaches across the school.
- Too often work in the Reception and Years 1 and 2 class is pitched at the same level for all the pupils in the class. For example, during English some of the less able or younger children in this class became confused. This was because they did not understand how to sequence writing or the way it was presented to them and, consequently, their learning was curtailed.
- Teachers have improved the way they teach phonics and this is helping pupils to make better progress in reading. Volunteers make effective contributions in extending pupils' reading skills.
- Teachers do not always make best use of teaching assistants in class lessons to quicken pupils' progress. At times teaching assistants provide too much assistance to pupils, which leads to some being reticent to work without help. These examples contrast sharply with the occasions when teaching assistants promoted better progress by challenging pupils at the right level in small groups. They are especially caring and supportive of pupils with complex needs.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils' achievement is inadequate because they do not make enough progress. Their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 is below average and has continued to decline since the previous inspection.
- In relation to the children's starting points on entry to school, which have been typical for their age, these levels of attainment reflect inadequate achievement over time.
- Pupils in Year 2 are currently demonstrating improved skills for their age in writing in response to some better teaching. However, continuing inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning in other year groups across the school means that pupils' underachievement is not being rectified quickly enough.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress is inadequate because of weak teaching. As a result, by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4 their writing, especially handwriting and spelling, and mathematical skills, have not been developed well enough for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils have made better and increasingly good progress in reading this academic year. This is because they enjoy stories and receive extra support from teaching assistants and volunteers at school and from their parents and carers at home.
- Over time, the most able pupils make inadequate progress. When questioned, several pupils commented that the work was too easy and sometimes 'boring'. This is because the activities presented to them too often fail to capture their interest and challenge them at the right level in relation to their understanding.
- The pupils' ability to make better progress was seen occasionally during the inspection. For example, in Year 2, pupils' interest was stimulated when reading and raising questions about volcanoes. However, most learning observed during the inspection and evidence in pupils' books reflected more variable and often slow progress.
- The small number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress when receiving close additional adult assistance. As with other pupils, their progress fluctuates and too often slows because of inconsistent teaching when taught in class. The very few pupils with complex learning difficulties receive more consistent and effective support and sustain good progress in relation to their abilities.
- Most of the small number of disadvantaged pupils supported by pupil premium funding also have special educational needs. Over time, their progress and achievement are better than those of other pupils in the school because of the effective support they receive.

The early years provision

is inadequate

- Leadership of the early years provision is inadequate, and teaching and children's progress have not been good enough since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher has striven to lead and develop this provision in recent terms during a period of long-

term staff absence. However, she has not been able to oversee the work of supply staff and provision effectively enough.

- The quality of teaching is inadequate. Staff keep examples of children's work and check their progress, but this information is not used well enough to make sure that the activities provided for the children pitch learning at the right level.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They are not always deployed effectively to help other pupils build on previous learning.
- Leadership has not ensured that the curriculum provided for children's development meets the statutory requirements for this key stage. Consequently, there is much variation in the relevance of the literacy and numeracy activities provided for the children and this results in inadequate achievement.
- Too often staff, especially those new or temporary to the school, do not take sufficient account of the children's starting points. For example, during the inspection all pupils in the class were observed trying to subtract two digit numbers and this confused most, especially the youngest children.
- By the time they enter Year 1, many of the children's skills and understanding remain underdeveloped, especially their mathematical and writing skills. Children are not prepared sufficiently for future learning.
- In contrast, children make better progress when experiencing more relevant and stimulating activities outdoors. For example, the children developed their social and speaking skills positively by planting flowers and in role play onboard the 'Pirate Ship'.
- Children are also taught and learn early reading skills effectively. This is because they are more often challenged at the right level and enthused by interesting stories. Parents and carers at home and volunteers and teaching assistants at school also support the children's good progress in reading.
- Staff provide good care and promote supportive relationships with the children. In response, children behave well, enjoy each other's company and try hard to please adults. Safeguarding arrangements are implemented effectively to keep pupils safe and secure.

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	123657
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	462469

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hilary Allom
Headteacher	Linda Howlett
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 May 2013
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