

St Catherine's CofE Nursery & Primary School

Musket Road, Newton Abbot, TQ12 6SB

Inspection dates 3–4 June 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.

- Pupils achieve well. They get off to a good start in the early years and then continue to make good progress in the rest of the school.
- Pupils' attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers plan exciting and purposeful activities that motivate pupils well and help them to learn new skills.
- Pupils who need extra support are given it quickly and to good effect. Those pupils supported by the pupil premium make rapid progress in all subjects.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and courteous, work hard and are great ambassadors for the school. They feel very safe and take good care of each other.
- Good leadership and management mean that the school continues to improve. Leaders across the federation have worked together well to improve pupils' attainment, the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.
- The governing body is knowledgeable about the school. It provides a good level of challenge and particularly good support through the federation.
- The early years provision is good. The wide variety of experiences children enjoy from an early age help them to make good progress.
- Work in and out of lessons, as well as numerous visits and clubs, provide pupils with many exciting experiences.
- The school environment is well developed and resourced. Staff use the outside areas well to make learning exciting and stimulating for pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Curriculum planning is not consistent enough to ensure that all pupils cover the same range of subjects across the mixed-year groups.
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar are introduced too late across the school to promote high levels of achievement in these subjects.
- The most able pupils are not always helped to make rapid progress because some lessons are not challenging enough for them.
- The comments that teachers write when they mark pupils' work do not always help pupils improve their learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 14 lessons and parts of lessons, two jointly with the head of school and the assistant headteacher. A visit was made to an assembly.
- Discussions were held with the executive headteacher, head of school, assistant headteacher, other leaders in the school, members of the federation governing body, a representative from the local authority, and parents and carers and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 14 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the views of parents gathered from informal discussions at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors considered school leaders' views on the quality of the school's work and their plans for school improvement, as well as information about pupils' progress. They also looked at whole-school curriculum planning documents, teachers' planning, pupils' work, documentation about safeguarding procedures and records relating to attendance and behaviour.
- The inspection team analysed the 15 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Julie Jane, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Linda Rowley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Catherine's Church of England Nursery & Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Since the previous inspection the school has become part of a federation of four schools, the United Schools Federation, under the leadership of an executive headteacher. A single governing body undertakes the strategic management of all four schools.
- A mutual support network is provided for staff and managers by the four schools in the federation. The executive headteacher is a National Leader of Education.
- The head of school joined the school in September 2014 after working at another school in the federation.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school runs a before-school club every morning in the hall.
- Early years provision in the Nursery class is provided on a part-time or full-time basis. Children have a choice of attending morning or afternoon sessions, or both. Children attend Reception on a full-time basis.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after) is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is higher than in most schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve curriculum planning to ensure consistency of coverage in all subjects across all classes and year groups.
- Improve the achievement of all pupils, particularly the most able, by:
 - making sure that comments that teachers write when they mark pupils' work clearly show the next steps pupils need to take in their learning
 - making sure that activities are well planned and challenging enough for the most able pupils to make rapid progress
 - ensuring the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar is applied more consistently across Key Stage 1.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The high aspirations of the executive headteacher and the head of school for their pupils are shared by all staff. Other leaders have thoroughly embraced the headteacher's ambitions for the school. Leaders and managers have benefited from the support of senior leaders across the federation.
- Senior leaders make good use of available information to check that all groups do well. They allocate funds to ensure that pupils who are in danger of falling behind receive the support they need to catch up. The school works hard to promote good relationships and robustly tackle discrimination.
- Pupil premium funding is put to very effective use. As a result no groups of pupils are performing significantly less well than their classmates. Leaders check the accuracy of school assessments by sharing information across year groups and other schools in the federation.
- Middle leaders' skills are developed through joint working across the federation, and achievement has improved because of the effective way they share their expertise. They are good role models in their own practice and give good support to others.
- The school works well with parents. Discussions with parents show that they appreciate the support they receive from the school. All those who responded on Parent View would recommend the school to others.
- The school's systems for the safeguarding of pupils meet statutory requirements. Pupils say there is no bullying. They feel confident to talk to any adult if they are worried because they know they will be listened to and helped.
- Pupils enjoy their learning. Leaders make sure that the subjects provided and the way pupils learn them meet their needs well. Teachers make good use of the school gardens and the outdoor spaces outside each classroom to bring learning alive.
- Pupils show understanding and compassion for each other, and happily celebrate other cultures and traditions, such as the Chinese New Year. Activities in lessons, clubs and visits contribute extremely well to pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including gaining a tolerance towards people of different faiths. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum (topics and subjects taught) promotes good progress in basic skills, and the school has introduced the new National Curriculum effectively. However, coverage across mixed year-groups is not always the same in different classes, and not all teachers are consistent enough in the planning of the subjects they teach.
- The additional funding provided by the government for sport is used to great effect to introduce pupils to new sports and improve the skills of teachers. There is a strong focus on improving participation rates of girls and enabling them to take part in a range of competitions across the county.

The governance of the school:

- The governing body provides solid support to the executive headteacher and leaders in the school in their drive to improve the school. Governors know how well the school is doing and how it compares with other schools through detailed reports from the head of school. They know where teaching is strong and how all teachers are helped to improve. They have established clear links between pay and performance so that pay awards are based on merit. Governors regularly visit the school to discuss with the head of school how well pupils are learning, look at the school's assessment tracking of pupils' progress, and observe day-to-day life at the school. Governors monitor all funding to the school well, especially that received through the pupil premium grant, to ensure that pupils receive value for money. They work closely with leaders to understand the impact that spending at the school is having on pupils' outcomes. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. They meet their other statutory duties well, including the appointment of staff.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Parents agree that this is the case.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is good. They are proud of their school and there is usually a happy and purposeful atmosphere in class. This is especially evident in Year 1, where behaviour is exemplary and pupils are highly positive about all aspects of their work.
- Pupils get on very well together and show respect for other classmates and adults in the school. No rough or inappropriate play was observed during the inspection because there is plenty to do, including a daily lunchtime sports activity provided by an outside agency.

- Pupils look after the school well. They are proud of their school environment and the school council is working to develop a 'peace garden'. There are also interesting artefacts around the school grounds that pupils enjoy, including a painted, lifesize statue of a cow and a sheep.
- Pupils are usually enthusiastic to learn, although in some classes they do not demonstrate the thirst for knowledge that would enable them to excel, even when the lessons are stimulating. For this reason their behaviour, overall, is not outstanding.
- Pupils look after equipment well, they are ready to learn and books are neat and work in them laid out well. No time is lost, because pupils respond very quickly to adults' instructions and requests.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils feel very safe at school. They know what bullying means, including cyber bullying, and how to avoid it. They say there is no bullying in school. Parents agreed, and said they were confident that it would be swiftly dealt with by the school on the rare occasions that it might occur.
- The school has good procedures in place to teach the pupils about avoiding danger both in school and in later life. Pupils can explain the dangers of alcohol, and discuss fire safety and social networking. They have a good grasp of e-safety and how to stay safe online.
- Attendance has improved over time and attendance figures are broadly in line with national figures. The school continues to work with parents to improve these further.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good, ensuring that pupils make good progress. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour well in lessons. They plan work that is engaging and builds successfully on pupils' positive attitudes to learning. This was seen, for example, in a Key Stage 1 lesson where pupils were excitedly looking for clues around the school and reading instructions to find a pirate's trophy. They then returned to the classroom to write interesting recounts of their journey.
- Reading, writing and mathematics are taught well. Teachers use their good subject knowledge when questioning pupils, which helps to deepen their pupils' understanding.
- Teachers plan lessons which engage pupils and allow them to discuss their learning with each other. They benefit from hearing each other's ideas and think more carefully about what they are learning. In one mathematics lesson, pupils learned well by considering the investigation set them by the teacher and deciding, in pairs, on an appropriate course of action to reach a conclusion.
- Most teaching assistants give good support to pupils who have been identified as needing extra help, those who are struggling with their work and those who are disabled or have special educational needs. Skilled guidance to help them improve makes a good contribution to the learning of these pupils.
- Parents who completed the online questionnaire, or talked to inspectors in the playground, say they are pleased with the quality of teaching in the school. They said that they are happy with the level of homework provided and they feel that their children are set challenging enough work.
- Teachers do not routinely write comments in pupils' books that help them improve their learning. Where pupils do not have precise next steps and time to reflect on teachers' comments, they do not know how to make their work better. As a result, pupils do not always learn from their mistakes and improve the quality of their work.
- While the school makes regular checks on pupils' attainment and progress, some teachers do not always set work at the right level. Work set for the most able is often the same as that given to the rest of the class. When these pupils finish quickly, the additional work they are given is not challenging enough, or carefully thought out, to ensure that they make good progress in the lesson.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children usually join the school in the Nursery class, arriving with skills and abilities at levels generally below those typical for their age. This is especially the case with their communication, language and literacy skills. From these low starting points, pupils achieve well. Their attainment rises to broadly average levels by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics, although the attainment of the most able pupils in these subjects was lower than expected in the national tests in 2014. The school's records show that this has now been addressed and the achievement of the most able pupils compares favourably with national averages.
- All pupils who took the phonics (the knowledge of sounds that letters make) check at the end of Year 1 in

2014 reached the expected standard. Older pupils read confidently for a wide range of purposes. The school has recently remodelled the library to make it more accessible to pupils and they make good use of it as a result. Pupils are generally enthusiastic about reading and are able to talk easily about their reading preferences. They are aware that developing good reading skills will help their employment prospects later in life.

- In the national assessments at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014, pupils reached broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards in grammar, punctuation and spelling in the school were below those in reading, writing and mathematics in the national tests in 2014. However, actions taken by the school show that current achievement in grammar, punctuation and spelling is rapidly improving. The school does not introduce grammar, punctuation and spelling consistently until Key Stage 2, which has had an impact on attainment.
- Disadvantaged pupils make progress from their individual starting points which is at least as good as their classmates. This is because the school has invested in small class sizes, and the support they receive meets their needs, both for their work and their emotional well-being. The gap between their attainment and that of other pupils is closing. By the end of Year 6, their attainment in English and mathematics is broadly in line with that of other pupils at the school and other pupils nationally.
- The individual requirements of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are quickly identified. Parents are involved at an early stage and say they are really pleased that the school works with them to put in place the help that pupils need. The specific help pupils are given helps them to make good progress.
- The achievement of the most able pupils and the proportion reaching the higher levels in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2014 was significantly below that of other pupils nationally. The school has worked hard to address this and achievement is improving for these pupils. However, some additional activities in lessons are still not challenging enough to accelerate progress, and some teachers plan work that is too easy for them.

The early years provision

is good

- Good teaching in the early years provision ensures that achievement is good. The environment is well planned and children engage in a range of activities, either chosen by them or led by an adult, that promote learning well.
- From starting points that are lower than typically found for children of their age, children in the early years provision make good progress. By the time they leave to enter Year 1, the proportion who reach a good level of development is higher than average, leaving them well prepared to start Year 1.
- The teacher makes effective use of a well-resourced outdoor area to allow children to practise and reinforce skills in literacy and numeracy as well as develop skills in all seven areas of learning. Adults skillfully ask questions to help children develop their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Learning journeys and records of children's progress across all areas of learning provide good evidence of children's development from their entry to the Nursery and on through the Reception classes. There is little evidence of parents sharing in the assessment process to develop a stronger partnership between home and school.
- Children made especially strong progress in 2013/14 in the use of technology, self-confidence, self-awareness and physical development. Reading, writing and numbers had been identified as areas to develop further. During the inspection, groups of children were seen working with adults to subtract two single-digit numbers by using the idea of predators eating bugs, making it exciting with puppets and chasing games. This shows that this area of mathematical learning is already being appropriately addressed.
- Children work together well, their behaviour is exemplary and there is a very happy atmosphere across the early years provision. Children show good levels of interest and curiosity, and clearly enjoyed sharing their learning with the inspector during the inspection. They are reminded about safety outside and in by staff, and move confidently throughout the setting.
- Provision is well led and managed. The experienced leader is constantly re-evaluating practice both indoors and out to improve the learning environment and outcomes for children.
- The Reception class teacher currently plans and supervises the provision as a whole, working across both classes. A new teacher has been appointed to take over in the Nursery from September 2015.

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	113463
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	461964

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Liz Thompson
Headteacher	Martin Harding: Executive Headteacher Marcus West: Head of School
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 November 2011
Telephone number	01626 832665
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