

Three Ways School

180 Frome Road, Bath, BA2 5RF

Inspection dates 11–12 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Early years provision	Outstanding	1
Sixth form provision	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- In this welcoming and popular school, pupils including those in the early years and sixth form, make outstanding progress. They achieve exceptionally well and are very suitably prepared for the next stages of learning or employment.
- Teaching is outstanding. In a very positive atmosphere for learning, high expectations are strongly conveyed to pupils. Planning is very well considered, assessment meticulous, and activities are relevant and enjoyable so that pupils try their best.
- Early years provision is outstanding. Children make excellent progress in all areas of learning because activities are extremely well organised and fun, and children are quickly engaged.
- Sixth form provision is excellent. Independence and decision making are highly promoted, very effectively encouraging academic achievement and personal development.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are courteous and enjoy school greatly. Deeply ingrained procedures to ensure safety lead to pupils feeling very secure. Parents are highly confident that their child is very well looked after.
- The headteacher's strong and effective leadership is fully supported by senior staff. Leadership is widely dispersed and staff are highly motivated to do their best. Governors know the school very well, steadfastly holding leaders to account. In consequence, leaders, managers and governors ensure that the school continually improves.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, six of them with senior staff. The breakfast club, an after-school club, and break and lunchtime arrangements were seen.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors heard individual pupils read. Reading is taken to include the use of text or symbols.
- The school’s work was observed. Inspectors looked at a range of documents including policies, records relating to keeping pupils safe, information on pupils’ behaviour and attendance, and assessments of pupils’ progress.
- Inspectors analysed 70 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Eighteen responses to the online questionnaire Parent View were examined as well as the school’s own analysis of a parental survey. A letter from a parent was seen and inspectors spoke informally to parents before and after school.

Inspection team

Michael Farrell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lynne Kauffman	Additional Inspector
Joyce Cox	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Three Ways School converted to become an academy on 1 September 2013. When its predecessor school, Three Ways School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good overall. The school is a single school academy.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or its newer replacement, an education, health and care plan. Pupils' main special educational needs are profound and multiple, severe, and moderate learning difficulties, and autism spectrum disorder.
- The number of pupils on role has increased in the past two years and the school is currently over-subscribed.
- Over a half of pupils are disadvantaged, a much higher proportion than that found nationally.
- Approximately 2% of pupils are looked after by the local authority.
- About 40% of pupils are girls. Most pupils are White British. About one in ten pupils is from a minority ethnic background.
- The school receives sports funding for primary-aged pupils.
- It receives literacy and numeracy 'catch-up' funding for Year 7 pupils.
- The school runs a breakfast club for a small number of pupils.
- It offers full-time provision for children in the early years.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the very wide range of information on pupil's behaviour is more efficiently gathered and analysed in order to refine further approaches that improve behaviour.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leaders, managers and governors are very ambitious for the school, instigating a highly focused drive to improve. Leaders of subjects and areas of provision have clear responsibilities, fulfilling them with commitment. Responsibilities are widely dispersed and staff keenly fulfil them. Accurate school self-evaluation, supported by extensive data and information, link well with challenging plans for improvement. All this sustains a culture which highly promotes excellent teaching and behaviour.
- Teaching is exceptionally well led and has improved accordingly, driven by an inspirational commitment to staff training and development. The school researches practice based on evidence and judiciously checks its effectiveness within the school before extending its use. Staff publish their work and pursue many opportunities for higher learning.
- Comprehensive programmes of study contribute highly effectively to pupils' progress and well-being. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strongly promoted through a positive atmosphere for learning. Religious education themes in the sensory studio, visits to holy places, trusting relationships with staff, opportunities to help others, numerous after-school clubs, arts activities, and trips enrich learning extremely effectively. These activities are integrated fully into programmes of learning and the school's ethos. In addition, British values such as fairness have long been deeply embedded in the school's culture, preparing pupils very well for life in modern Britain.
- Careers advice and guidance are fully integrated into programmes of learning giving pupils an increasing understanding of the world of work.
- Equal opportunities are secured through ensuring that high-quality support and teaching, and very good relationships, lead to each pupil doing as well as they can. There is no evidence of discrimination.
- Detailed, accurate information on pupils' behaviour is carefully gathered and comprehensively used in managing behaviour and promoting well-being. Being largely paper-based, the information is difficult to access and analyse quickly. The school recognises the need to streamline the process to refine its already strong behaviour management.
- Since becoming an academy, the school has maintained effective links with the local authority, which has a clear awareness of the school's strengths, providing effective support when necessary.
- Parents generally hold very positive views. One stated, echoing many others, 'We couldn't wish for a better school.' A very small number of parents consider that the school's communications require improving. However, inspectors judge that the school communicates effectively with parents, through newsletters, open evenings and coffee mornings, and through detailed reports on their child's progress. Three Ways provides extensive training for other schools, as well as valued support through 'Brighter Futures', its special education outreach service.
- Funding is used conscientiously. The pupil premium is allocated for individual pupils and uses include increasing therapist support, enhancing pupils' communication, behaviour and well-being. Primary sports funds are effectively deployed, for example, to increase sports coaching and to offer horse riding, precipitating increased attendance at lunchtime clubs and higher participation in sports. Year 7 catch-up funding is thoughtfully allocated to specialist support for literacy and numeracy, accelerating students' progress.
- Safeguarding fully meets statutory requirements. The arrangements are highly effective, with examples of strong practice. Great diligence is shown in staff recruitment and safeguarding training.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school very well, holding it to account determinedly. They know the quality of teaching from visiting the school and from receiving reports. They check that pupils' achievement is high, including through questioning the school about its assessments and results. With contributions from an external adviser, governors rigorously manage the headteacher's performance. They oversee the process relating to all staff, so that only strong performance is rewarded. The governing body and the school support staff very well. Governors, aware of the challenges of increased pupil numbers, recently issued a staff questionnaire, collated responses, positive and negative, and are conscientiously responding to the replies.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This is aided by the school's harmonious atmosphere and pupils' pride in the school. Pupils are eager to learn so that they arrive at lessons on time ready to enjoy their learning, which has a strong effect on their progress.
- Pupils attend school regularly. They are aware of how important their attitudes are to learning. Pupils show care and consideration for each other, for example, through the 'big friend-little friend' scheme.
- Pupils, parents and staff are very positive about pupils' behaviour and safety. In the breakfast club, pupils experience a very settled start to the day. Behaviour is excellent in lessons, at breaks and lunchtimes, and around school. Where there is occasional disruption, other pupils get on with their work and learning continues. Pupils recognise that their behaviour improves during their time at school.
- There are no permanent exclusions. Fixed-term exclusions are lower than for special schools nationally. Fixed-term exclusions increased this year compared with last year, largely due to a very small number of pupils being excluded for short periods. The school applies such exclusions only when absolutely necessary, using them as an aid to bring about better behaviour.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel safe and secure, and according to their levels of understanding, have a developing comprehension of risks in and out of school. Safety is highlighted in lessons. Key Stage 4 pupils learned effectively through making their own slide presentations about various aspects of safety, including the abuse of drugs.
- Pupils develop increasing understanding of safety in different settings and circumstances, including how to stay safe when using the internet and other forms of modern communication, as well as road safety and water safety. They act safely in lessons and around school, with a growing awareness of the needs of others.
- Pupils expressed no concerns about bullying in any of its forms, either physical or verbal. The school recognises that bullying is rare. Where it does occur, the school takes effective steps to deal with it.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Staff create a very positive climate for learning in lessons through their enthusiasm and warm relationships between staff and pupils. Consequently, teaching is predominantly outstanding and never less than good, leading to pupils' exceptional progress.
- High expectations are conveyed to pupils and they respond very well. Effective planning and assessment help ensure that staff and pupils are clear about what is being learned. Highly effective teaching has a strong impact of pupils' excellent progress in literacy, reading, mathematics and communication, and the earlier basic skills and understanding that lead to these.
- Teachers combine a detailed knowledge of individual pupils with a broader deep understanding of child development and subject knowledge to ensure activities are highly suitable and challenging.
- Precise targets for learning are used and pupils' learning is meticulously checked, including during lessons. Perceptive marking and annotating of work is up to date. Symbols and other visual aids are used to help pupils to understand teachers' comments, helping pupils' progress.
- Teachers, teaching assistants and other professionals, including speech and language therapists, work together as a coherent team to the benefit of pupils' experience of learning. Teaching assistants are skilfully deployed and make a very strong contribution to pupils' achievements and development. Interesting and appropriate resources are used very well and staff encourage pupils' high levels of enjoyment.
- Staff use a wide range of strategies to engage pupils. These draw on approaches where there is evidence of effectiveness but are evaluated within the school to ensure they are working for particular pupils. Behaviour is very well managed so that where there is occasional inappropriate behaviour, it is dealt with calmly and learning soon continues.
- In Key Stage 4, because discussion and ideas were sensitively and encouragingly elicited by the teacher, pupils enjoyed and applied themselves very well in a lesson considering possible future jobs and the skills they had or might need to do them well.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- From widely different starting points, pupils make excellent progress, including in literacy and pre-literacy, numeracy and pre-numeracy, and communication. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is

strongly and effectively encouraged. This high achievement is reflected in pupils' work, lessons observed, and the views of pupils, parents and staff. Assessments of attainment and progress are checked and compared within the school and with another school to ensure their accuracy.

- Individuals and different groups of pupils make strong progress. Boys and girls, pupils with different types of special educational needs, for example, profound or severe learning difficulties, and pupils from different minority ethnic groups all make excellent progress. Pupils looked after by the local authority make very strong progress because care, support and education are tailored to their individual needs and circumstances.
- Younger pupils made excellent progress in a lesson where the teacher read a familiar book to them with great enthusiasm and other adults very effectively encouraged pupils' participation, verbally and using sign language. Secondary-aged pupils in a mathematics lesson concentrated and achieved very well in response to the structured learning and special resources which laid the foundation for later planned practical applications.
- The comparatively most-able pupils in the school make very strong progress and achieve outstandingly because they are highly challenged by activities and expectations.
- Owing to their learning difficulties, disadvantaged pupils and other pupils educated at the school reach levels of attainment that are much lower than that of all pupils in schools nationally. Because of the school's meticulous assessment and individually tailored programmes, disadvantaged pupils make the same excellent progress as other pupils in the school.
- Pupils who can read may use text or symbols and read frequently because they enjoy reading and can see the improvements that they are making. While reading to inspectors, they concentrated hard and read with increasing confidence. One pupil affirmed of his reading that the school 'helps me a lot'.
- Close teamworking between different professionals powerfully contributes to pupils' progress and achievement. For example, in a lesson for younger pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, teachers, a teaching assistant, and speech and language therapist worked very closely to elicit and record the smallest response of pupils to activities using 'resonance boards'.
- Older students achieve well in a range of examinations. No students are entered early for any GCSEs. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stages of their learning or employment. Nearly all leavers last year moved on to training, education or employment.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children start Reception class with basic skills significantly below those typical for their age, including their language and social skills. They make outstanding progress in all areas of their learning because of exceptional care and support. Their progress is meticulously recorded in impressive 'learning logs', work files and the school's progress information.
- On entry, children are assessed rigorously and accurately. Their personal strengths and preferred methods of communication inform detailed individual learning plans, enabling staff to plan stimulating activities. This results in children making rapid and sustained progress. They respond fully to the strong focus on communication and thinking skills, and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Children's learning is extremely well organised and activities are enjoyable so children are swiftly engaged and concentrate for increasing periods of time. Staff have high expectations for children's learning and behaviour. Consequently, all children behave very well and learn to follow rules, share nicely and take turns.
- Staff are highly skilled at providing a vibrant learning environment, indoors and outdoors, perfectly balancing adult-led and child-selected learning activities. Resources are accessible and are of high quality. The teacher is very skilled at using songs to enable children to move smoothly between activities.
- Adults work well with small groups and individuals, and offer a model of excellent behaviour, language and play. They are highly enthusiastic play partners and share children's delight in activities such as going 'Under the Ocean' in the sensory studio. The music specialist presented exciting images and musical sounds extremely well so that all children were absorbed in 'travelling' in a submarine and seeing sharks, dolphins and an octopus.
- Children are kept safe, and staff ensure that resources are clean and well maintained. Staff are highly skilled at adapting learning to match children's abilities. The most-able children can join Year 1 and Year 2 pupils in learning the names of sounds and letters.
- Leadership and management are outstanding owing to key staff members' specialised knowledge about young children's learning and development. They track children's progress rigorously, ensuring that all,

regardless of background, gender or need, achieve as well as they can. An excellent partnership is swiftly established with parents who are happy and amazed at how much their children are learning.

The sixth form provision

is outstanding

- Students' progress is outstanding. Their academic, personal and social development is excellent, particularly with regard to the skills required for the world of work. Very strong employability skills are reflected, for example, in the school gaining a Bath Education Trust (BET) award.
- Highly inclusive programmes of work, visits and trips, including challenging outdoor education courses, enrich the provision. Students at all levels are credited for their achievements, including through pre-entry level, and entry-level qualifications. Many opportunities are provided to assist students in understanding the world of work and making good choices for the future, including for continuing education or work.
- Exciting spiritual, moral, social and cultural programmes, encouragement for independence, opportunities to assume responsibility, and the strong promotion of British values highly encourage outstanding behaviour and personal development. Students enjoy their studies greatly and, while they can cite many subjects and activities they like, they insist that there are none that they do not enjoy.
- Behaviour is excellent because students make full use of all that the provision offers. Students are polite and caring towards others. Awareness of safety and risks is embedded through extensive personal, social and health education programmes, which encourage debate and promote decision making.
- Teaching is outstanding. Very good planning and precise targets help ensure learning is tightly focused. Teachers, teaching assistants and others work very closely together to enhance students' learning. Students take responsibility for recording their own work and achievements. Speaking and listening are greatly encouraged, as in a discussion about work experience in which students were confident to express their views and preferences.
- In a physical educational basketball lesson, flexible planning took account of students' individual needs. Staff participated as effective role models so that students excellently developed teamworking and an understanding of how to use game strategies. Because small steps for improvement were carefully nurtured and recorded, students in a design and technology lesson securely practised and consolidated fine and large movements. Students enjoy applying their skills and understanding in good outdoor learning opportunities.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Leaders convey high expectations to staff and students. Planning is carried out collegiately so that all understand what is to be learned. Collaboration with other schools and the school's own research into what approaches work best fully inform the excellent provision. However, the very detailed behaviour data that are collected and used are sometimes difficult to access rapidly.

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	140079
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	450321

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	192
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	27
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Comer
Headteacher	Julie Dyer
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01225 838070
Fax number	01225 830377
Email address	enquiries@threeways.co.uk

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