

Longford Church of England (VC) Primary School

High Road, Britford, Salisbury, SP5 4DS

Inspection dates

14–15 October 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching does not yet consistently provide challenge for all ability levels in all classes.
- The school's new systems for recording what pupils can do is not yet well used by teachers to make sure all pupils get work at the right level of difficulty. The progress that pupils make in their learning is not strong enough, despite major improvements last year.
- Teachers who lead on different areas of the school's work have only just taken on these responsibilities. This means that their understanding of the areas that need improvement and their plans to do this are still developing. They have not yet made enough impact on pupils' achievement to make it good.
- The outdoor provision for Reception children does not extend their opportunities for learning sufficiently.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher's high aspirations for the school are shared by staff, parents, pupils and governors, and have driven rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils. Teaching and achievement continue to improve quickly.
- Governors have improved the way that they check on the progress the school is making and are now good at holding school leaders to account for the performance of pupils.
- The school now has effective actions to improve attendance, and both long- and short-term absences are much less than they were last year.
- The behaviour of pupils is much better than it was at the previous inspection. The school provides effective support to help individual pupils improve their behaviour if needed.

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve learning and progress for all pupils, particularly the most able, by:
 - developing the use of assessment information to provide activities that are more closely linked to pupils' abilities
 - making sure that pupils are given activities that are neither too hard nor too easy, particularly when the whole of a mixed-age class work together.
- Increase leaders' ability and experience in monitoring, planning and developing their areas of responsibility
- Improve the provision for Reception children, especially outside the classroom, so that they can access the full range of activities throughout the day.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management **requires improvement**

- Teachers are having appropriate training to help them improve but they still lack expertise in planning work that builds on the assessment of what pupils can and cannot do.
- Last year, the leadership of aspects of the school, such as subject areas or support for special educational needs, was not effective. The headteacher has taken actions to address this, including taking on some areas herself. This year, the new teachers have only just started to lead on some of these areas and so they lack training and their plans for improvement are not yet strong enough. They have not all been fully involved in monitoring their area of work yet and so do not have a strong understanding of the changes needed. The headteacher has been working on this and has prioritised it as an area for development.
- Strong actions have been taken to improve teaching, including holding teachers to account for their performance and giving them clear targets to help them to do better. New members of staff, appointed from January and during the summer term, have fitted in quickly and are adapting their teaching for the mixed-age classes in the school. The headteacher monitors teaching and learning carefully through observations and regular examination of pupils' work.
- The school's actions to support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are coordinated by the headteacher, with good support from a teaching assistant. This is effective and ensures that these pupils make good progress.
- The headteacher also leads the school's work on safeguarding and child protection. The school cooperates well with other agencies to support pupils who need extra help, and is proactive in addressing their needs. Staff safeguarding training is up to date, and the headteacher has organised additional training on issues such as radicalisation and child sexual exploitation. Together with the school's 'Tackling Extremism and Radicalisation' policy and updated filtering of the internet this means that the school has taken prompt action to address such dangers. School records and practice ensure that recruitment is safe. This work, together with the care and attention devoted to health and safety and site security, means that the school's actions to keep children safe are sound.
- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and has made significant improvements since she took up the post. Together with the governors, she has taken effective action to address many of the issues identified in the last inspection report, and the school is now improving strongly from a low base.
- The headteacher's understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school is strong, and this is communicated clearly to the governors in regular reports.
- The headteacher has placed a very strong focus on improving attendance through the weekly newsletter, individual letters to all parents, improved routines and good cooperation with outside agencies to support individual families. This consistent and persistent approach has had a strong effect on improving attendance and reducing persistent absence.
- Actions to improve behaviour, such as a strengthened behaviour policy, well designed and delivered support for individual pupils, increased use of rewards and greater consistency from teachers, have had a very positive effect. Behaviour at the school is now good as a result.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is being used effectively to develop physical activity and pupils' wellbeing.
- The headteacher has constructed the curriculum to support the development of pupils' self-confidence and is keen that teaching should encourage independence where appropriate for the learning activity. Through feedback from parents, pupils and staff, it is evident that this policy is becoming successful. The school offers an appropriate range of subjects within lessons and widens the pupils' experiences through assemblies, trips, visitors to the school and after-school clubs.
- Within lessons, pupils are encouraged to develop their understanding of their own and others' needs and feelings through personal, social and health education, citizenship and religious education. Together with activities such as assemblies and student council elections, this means that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain. There is no discriminatory behaviour at the school and leaders promote equality of opportunity effectively.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance has developed strongly since the last inspection, following an external review. Governors have analysed their strengths and training needs, reorganised the way that they work and are much more heavily involved in the school. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and show high aspiration to improve it. They have made a concerted effort to make sure that policies are up to date and a full range of policies is published on the school's website.
 - Governors use a range of evidence to check what is happening at the school so that they are able to hold the headteacher to account for the performance of the school. They have a strong understanding of the performance management of teaching staff and its use to reward teachers appropriately for the success they have in their work.
 - The governing body is fully aware of its statutory duties and ensures that additional finance that the school receives, such as pupil premium funding and the physical education and sports premium, is well spent.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- The work given to pupils is not always at the appropriate level to help them make progress and the use of assessment information for this purpose is sometimes weak. This aspect is improving, but is not yet consistent. The work that pupils are given within the mixed-age classes is often varied according to the year group and sometimes tailored for individual pupils. This can include specific tasks, such as the investigation given to a pupil during the inspection which he found interesting and challenging.
- Too often, particularly when the whole of a mixed-age class works together, the activities are too difficult for some of the pupils, or too easy for others.
- The teaching of reading is improving. Pupils are supported in their reading by volunteers, and the newly developed library area gives them good opportunities to choose a range of books. The proportion of pupils who reached the phonics threshold last year was broadly similar to 2014 but not yet high. The school gives good support to those pupils that do not reach the threshold so that they can develop their reading skills. Despite improvements, some older pupils are still not reading fluently.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and carefully, and provide helpful advice about how to improve (next steps), as detailed in the school's policy. These next steps often challenge pupils and there is evidence of them improving their work as a result (shown by a 'purple polishing pen'). However, this does not happen consistently.
- Teaching has been improving strongly recently and so the progress that pupils make in their learning is better. This happened for some classes more quickly than others, as new teachers started work, and so some pupils are still catching up with their learning. There is now consistency in the way that teachers communicate what pupils will be learning. This can be seen in the books and helps the pupils understand what they are doing.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and this helps them plan good learning experiences. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding during the lesson and this has helped improve learning. The use of self-assessment by pupils has grown, but is not consistent, and so pupils are not always clear about how well they are doing.
- There are higher expectations of what pupils can achieve and the amount of work that they should produce and this is shown in their books, which are becoming a credit to them and the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school has worked hard to improve pupils' confidence through drama and physical education lessons, increasing the use of praise and rewards, and working with individual pupils who had low self-esteem. This has helped the pupils approach challenges in class with more confidence and enabled them to work more independently when required. Older pupils, in particular, have been encouraged to 'have a go' and understand that, although they will not always succeed, this is how we learn.
- Pupils are keen to do well at school and are proud of their work. They are now also proud of their school and enthusiastic about learning. When asked, they could cite several aspects of the school that they liked and few areas to improve, although one suggested improving the way that pupils got on at playtime by adjusting the arrangements for ball games.
- Pupils showed a good understanding of how to keep safe and could list a large number of ways that the school had acted to help them be safe. Parents, governors and staff feel that the school provides a safe environment.
- The pupils had a good understanding of bullying, and felt that, if there were an incident, then they could talk to an adult in the school and it would be dealt with effectively. The large majority of parents were also positive about how the school deals with this issue.
- Through assemblies, church services, raising money for charity, and through discussions in class, pupils have good opportunities to be reflective about the way they interact with others, understand their responsibilities and rights, and to develop respect for other cultures and religions. Pupils showed good understanding about why people might be treated differently, such as racism or homophobia, and were confident that this did not happen at this school. They discussed maturely the single racist incident that happened last year and its resolution. Pupils are confident that the school community treat all pupils equally and that there is no discrimination.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Parents, governors, pupils and staff testify to the strong improvements in behaviour over the past year and feel that behaviour is now good. High expectations from teachers and the consistent operation of a simple behaviour policy have reduced the number of incidents dramatically. The frequent use of praise and rewards has encouraged pupils to behave well and has improved their self-esteem. Governors and parents commented on how well the pupils behaved at the recent harvest festival service and on the walk there and back.
- Through strong cooperation with parents, partner agencies, skilled individual support and improved class management by teachers, the behaviour of some pupils has improved dramatically. Parents are very grateful for this improvement with one commenting that this has 'restored their faith in education', and 'changed our lives'.
- Attendance has risen and was close to the national average last year. The number of pupils with very low attendance (persistent absence) fell dramatically last year, and further still this year, so that currently there are none.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- The progress that the majority of the pupils made during last year was not good enough. During the course of the year, this progress improved, and the pupils in Years 5 and 6 were making good progress by the end of the year. Evidence from pupils' books across the school shows that they are now making much better progress but, as one of the pupils remarked, 'We are learning well now but we know that we need to catch up.'
- Progress during Key Stage 1 last year was slow, and so pupils at the end of Year 2 were not well prepared for Key Stage 2. The school is aware of this and has made effective arrangements to help these pupils catch up in their learning.

- The progress of current pupils has not been consistently strong regardless of their starting points and the attainment of pupils has not always been strong enough to ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Children in Reception last year made sufficient progress so that the majority reached a good level of development by June. A higher proportion achieved this than the previous cohort. The school had concentrated on improving writing, as this had been very low in the previous year, and this was successful. Children in Reception were well prepared to start Year 1 this year.
- There are small numbers of disadvantaged pupils in the school, with none in some year groups including year 6 last year. Overall, their progress was similar to other pupils in their year and was stronger in reading and writing than in mathematics.
- Pupils with special educational needs made very strong progress across the school except in Reception where progress was in line with other children. The school's analysis of the progress of the more able and the least able lacks clarity, so that it is difficult for any shortfalls to be addressed.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- Limitations to the outside space and equipment mean that the provision of a full range of learning experiences is hampered. Reception children do not access the full range of provision throughout the day. Leaders know that the school cannot yet offer the full range of experiences the children need. The early years leader has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of provision and is keen to make improvements. The recent development of a 'mud kitchen' has been a popular addition to the outside area and has enabled children to develop their communication, cooperation and motor skills. The extension on to the grass bank has also helped to improve the area.
- The teacher has a good understanding of the abilities of the Reception children in her mixed-age class and good subject knowledge. When teaching the whole class, she provides questions and activities that are at the right level to include the Reception children. She plans carefully to offer the right learning experiences for the different ages in her class but this is not always successful and so there are occasions when children do not make strong enough progress.
- Children behave well because of the high expectations of the adults and the generally consistent approach to managing the class. However, there are occasions when the activities are not well enough matched to the children's development and, at these times, their attention wanders, preventing strong progress.
- Last year the Reception class made good progress and the majority reached the standard expected (a good level of development) by the end of the year. As a consequence, children were ready to start Year 1. This is a big improvement compared to the previous year and was due to the improvement leaders made in the development of the children's writing skills.
- The early years leader made arrangements to meet with parents and visit nurseries or other providers at the end of the summer term so that transition into Reception was well managed. This was especially important as it was not possible to do this at the beginning of term when she was already teaching Year 1.
- Policies and procedures are implemented consistently and there are no breaches of statutory welfare requirements. Consequently, safeguarding is effective.

School details

Unique reference number	126304
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10001602

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

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	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Stuart Fowler
Headteacher	Mrs Naomi Shrimpton
Telephone number	01722 327292
Website	www.longford.wilts.sch.uk
Email address	admin@longford.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 October 2013

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school. There are three mixed-age classes.
- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2014. All of the teaching staff new to the school since the previous inspection.
- The support the school was receiving from a National Support School finished during last year but the local authority continues to work closely with the school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is average although this varies widely depending on the year group. The pupil premium is additional funding provided for children who are looked after by the local authority or who are eligible for free school meals.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in six lessons, four of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- The views of parents were collected through the 16 responses to Parent View, the school's own questionnaire for parents, talking to parents at the start of the day and through letters and emails from parents.
- The inspector reviewed documents provided by the school and from the school website, including the school's own evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning, the progress that pupils are making, how the school makes sure that pupils are kept safe, and plans for further improvements. External evaluations of the school, the progress reports from the local authority and governor minutes were also examined.
- During the two days, the inspector met governors, a representative of the local authority, the headteacher, teaching staff, teaching assistants and pupils. Staff views were also gathered through a questionnaire and the inspector heard pupils read.
- The inspector looked at pupils' recent work as well as work from last year.

Inspection team

Tom Morrison, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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