

# Evercreech Church of England Primary School

Paradise Crescent, Evercreech, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 6EH

<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 March 2016
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The executive headteacher, other leaders and the governing body have created a culture where all staff are encouraged to work together to improve outcomes for pupils. As a result, the school has improved well since its last inspection.
- Senior leaders have implemented a curriculum which motivates and engages pupils in their learning. They have ensured that teaching and outcomes are now good.
- Pupils of all abilities, including those who have special educational needs or disability, make good progress.
- Pupils are proud of their school. Their attendance is good and they value the support they receive.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, with teachers and teaching assistants using their strong subject knowledge effectively to develop pupils' learning in a wide range of subjects.
- Children in the early years make good progress due to the good teaching they receive. They benefit from learning in an environment that is well suited to their needs.
- Pupils' behaviour around school is good and they show positive attitudes to learning. These good attitudes contribute well to their spiritual, moral, and social development.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. Leaders have developed effective safeguarding practices and ensure that all staff follow them.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Leaders do not always rigorously evaluate the quality of teaching. As a result, there are variations in the level of challenge offered to pupils.
- Teachers' expectations of writing are high in English, but not as high in other subjects.
- Handwriting is not taught consistently well in all classes.
- The curriculum is not sufficiently developing pupils' understanding of the multicultural and multi-faith aspects of British values.
- There is inconsistency in teachers' application of the school's marking policy and as a result pupils are not always expected to correct their errors by responding to the guidance provided.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of all leaders and especially middle leaders on the quality of teaching by:
  - ensuring that teachers strongly challenge the most able to further develop their skills in mastery and accelerate progress
  - making certain that teachers' expectations of pupils' writing are equally as high in all subjects and that teachers help pupils to effectively use their basic skills when producing sustained pieces of writing in a range of subjects
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to learn about religions other than Christianity, and ensuring that greater consideration is given to improving pupils' understanding of British values
  - monitoring the quality of handwriting throughout the school to ensure that the new style is taught consistently well and that teachers have high expectations when this style of handwriting is used
  - being more rigorous in checking teachers' marking, so that teachers follow the school's policy consistently and make sure that pupils regularly respond to comments and correct their work.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The vision statement of Evercreech Church of England Primary reads 'Believe, Learn, Grow', which captures the ethos of this school. Parents, staff and pupils consider they are listened to and valued under the leadership of the executive headteacher and the leadership team.
- Staff and governors share a love of children and a passionate commitment to making sure the school community provides the best care and education for their pupils. The executive headteacher together with the extremely competent and committed assistant headteacher has ensured that Evercreech School has improved significantly since the last inspection and is in a much better place to improve further.
- At the time of the previous inspection, procedures to improve pupils' outcomes, the management of the performance of staff and the impact of middle leaders were judged to be not effective enough. Very soon after the inspection, governors, together with school leaders, began to tackle the issues raised and worked successfully to embed much improved procedures. There is a clear cycle for setting teachers' targets and observing class practice, analysing pupils' progress and the scrutiny of their workbooks is an established process. Teaching has improved significantly but leaders recognise that on occasions it is not sufficiently challenging in one class in particular.
- The leadership team have skills which link together well to provide a clear, systematic direction for school improvement. They have used all available information to make an accurate analysis of the overall effectiveness of the school. Consequently, self-evaluation is secure, albeit cautious in a couple of judgements. This generally accurate assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses has enabled leaders to create a clear, systematic plan for further improvement.
- Expectations are usually high, especially in raising of standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, leaders have taken their eye off the ball when considering the quality of work produced in other subjects. While high standards are clearly seen in English and mathematics, the expectations for pupils to produce good-quality pieces of extended writing in other subjects are not always high enough.
- Teachers are relishing their individual training, which is making them better practitioners. Their individual expertise and skills enable them to use these strengths for the benefit of the whole school.
- New programmes and procedures have been introduced to promote good-quality English and mathematics teaching and learning. The impact can be seen in pupils' improved achievement in all year groups, especially in Year 6 in 2015.
- Subject leaders are gaining in confidence and competence. Roles and responsibilities have been reviewed so that subject leaders are now leading specific subjects more effectively. However, they have not always been rigorous enough when checking on the teaching and learning in some classes.
- Inconsistencies in the work of a very small number of teachers, for example in using pupils' targets, consistently marking work so that pupils improve and in encouraging tidy handwriting have not been always dealt with swiftly.
- Staff have successfully planned an exciting, broad and balanced curriculum which covers all areas of the national curriculum and takes into account pupils' interests. Pupils are enjoying the wide range of subjects and activities. Visits and visitors bring their learning to life. Leaders are keeping the curriculum under review to ensure that it continues to develop.
- Pupils enjoy extra-curricular activities such as basketball, science club and residential visits. These go a long way in developing pupils' resilience, teamwork and ability to take measured risks. Good use is made of visits outside of school to enhance pupils' learning.
- Leaders use the additional pupil premium funding to effectively promote learning by employing more learning assistants who successfully deliver bespoke support to pupils. This enables these pupils to access learning equally as well as their peers. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils' progress continues to improve and the gap between disadvantaged pupils and pupils nationally continues to close.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability has greatly improved. Pupils who need support are now effectively identified and matched to the correct programmes so that they are generally achieving as well as their peers.
- Leaders use the physical education and sports funding for primary schools very effectively to ensure that pupils learn and take part in a wide range of sports. Boys and girls have equal access to these activities. Additionally, teachers' skills in a wide variety of sports have increased as a result of training from visiting coaches.

- Pupils' knowledge of life in modern Britain is developing steadily. Pupils spoke knowledgeably about the election process and democratic decision making but not about mutual respect for those of different faiths and beliefs. They were able to explain aspects such as the rule of law but not about individual liberty. Fundamental British values are not sufficiently central to the school's work in helping pupils understand different communities.
- Relationships with parents are generally good, although a small number raised some concerns over the impact of the federation with another school on school leadership. They believe that leaders are difficult to contact. The inspector found no evidence of concern when checking this because at least one of the senior leaders is almost always available every day. The following was a common positive view of the school: 'my children are thriving at school, every year they have more opportunities to do so, both academically and extra-curricular. There is a real feel of a continual drive for improvement coming from the school, which I am very pleased about.'
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governance is strong. Governors care passionately about the school.
  - Governors take their responsibilities seriously and know the school well. This knowledge is deepening as they make focused visits to the school to find out for themselves the impact of their decisions and to challenge school leaders.
  - Governors attend meetings with the executive headteacher when advisors and consultants visit the school. This helps them to secure an external view of the school, making sure they keep abreast of where performance and practice is strong and where improvements can be made.
  - Governors access training regularly to help them fulfil their responsibilities very well. They have recently received training in helping to keep pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism.
  - Governors have an in-depth knowledge of performance management procedures and make sure that teachers' pay reflects their performance. They receive external support when setting performance targets for the executive headteacher and these targets are carefully aligned to areas of improvement in the school.
- Governors receive clear information on pupils' progress which enables them to check on the effectiveness of pupil premium expenditure. The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that all staff and governors have up-to-date training and that everyone, including staff new to the school, know what to do if they have any concerns. Policies and procedures to keep pupils safe are reviewed regularly and are shared with staff and volunteers. All staff and volunteers are subject to rigorous checks before they are allowed to work with pupils. Risk assessments are completed regularly and are checked by senior leaders. Almost every parent questioned agreed that their child feels safe in school.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that all pupils receive the support they need during lessons. Staff have secure subject knowledge and use this to ask questions skilfully in order to check and develop pupils' understanding.
- Teachers ensure that pupils enjoy the interesting activities they set. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were still reflecting on their recent visit to Stonehenge. Children in the early years were excitedly talking about their topic of dragons. Staff were adept in asking questions which supported children in developing their own learning.
- Lessons are well planned, with all adults managing pupils' behaviour effectively. Routines are well established. This results in orderly classrooms where pupils can concentrate on their learning. Positive relationships are seen throughout the school and consequently pupils get on sensibly and enjoy their learning. Teachers treat pupils with care and fairness, which means that pupils, in turn, like and respect their teachers. They are keen to please them by working hard and behaving well.
- The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is effective. This is because all relevant staff know precisely what these pupils need to do to succeed. Pupils enjoy this good teaching and, as a result, look forward to the sessions and make good progress.
- Homework is appreciated by pupils and a significant number of parents. This is because it is linked closely to the current topic work and enables parents to support their child's learning at home. A small number of parents report they are unhappy with the lack of consistency and regularity in the setting of homework and expectations in terms of marking the homework across classes.

- Reading is taught well, with teachers and teaching assistants using their strong subject knowledge to support pupils effectively in developing their reading skills. Children in the Reception class are quick to secure their understanding of letters and the sounds that they make (phonics). Good practice is maintained through Key Stages 1 and 2, where pupils enjoy reading in a range of subjects. One pupil in Year 2 told the inspector of her times reading Shakespeare and her enjoyment of Terry Pratchett books.
- The English subject leader has organised staff to consistently encourage pupils to read a range of texts. Classes read books by different authors every half term, and extend their vocabulary and skills through reading poems and using the 'word of the week'. These have raised the profile of reading for all pupils and boys in particular.
- The teaching of the content writing in English lessons is consistently good in every year group, with pupils of all ability groups making good progress. Innovations such as 'Writing Windows' are designed to enable pupils to display longer pieces of writing and to see how their skills are improving over time. The impact of pupils writing in a variety of styles has been positive and can be seen in pupils' English books. However, the teachers' expectations of writing are not as high in other subjects and as a result pupils' opportunities to write extended pieces of work in history and religious education, for example, are limited. In addition, the teaching of handwriting and demands for neat presentation are not consistent.
- The school has recently spent a good deal of time making changes to the handwriting approach in school. However, this is not followed consistently by all teachers.
- Mathematics is usually taught well to all ability groups and pupils' books show they have made good progress. Teaching of mathematics is not yet outstanding throughout the school because, in some classes, pupils are not always set challenging enough tasks, especially for the most able. They sometimes 'overpractice' skills they already know rather than deepening their understanding and mastery of a topic. When pupils are set harder work they thrive. They make rapid progress when they have to think harder and respond to challenging questioning from both teachers and teaching assistants. This very positive teaching was seen in Year 5 and 6 when pupils expertly considered how to find the surface area of a square-based pyramid and then film themselves explaining their work to their classmates.
- In their marking, teachers identify specifically what pupils need to do to make further improvements to their work, but pupils are not routinely expected to correct work as a matter of urgency. Neither do teachers check to ensure that it is done at a later time. Progress is slowed when pupils' errors are not addressed effectively and so they do not make the necessary improvement.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils want to do well and have good attitudes towards learning, which helps them make good progress. They spoke to the inspector with enthusiasm about their school and their lessons.
- Pupils are polite and friendly and respectful of adults and each other. All pupils at a meeting with the inspector agreed that it is right to respect people from other backgrounds and to treat everyone equally. However, when questioned more deeply they have a very limited understanding of the wide range of ethnic groups who make up our society and only have a superficial understanding of the range of faiths and cultures present in this country.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They know how to stay safe using the internet and social media and say the school helps them to be aware of potential dangers outside of school. Almost all parents who responded to the online questionnaire agree that their children feel safe in school, are happy and are well looked after.
- Pupils understand that there are different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. They told inspectors that bullying in school is very rare, as it is not tolerated. They are confident, however, that if a problem did occur, teachers would deal with it straight away.
- Parents and pupils appreciate the breakfast club, which provides a safe and healthy start to the day. One parent commented, 'This provides a very caring and supportive environment where I can leave my children as I go to work.' Children agree and talk about it being 'A fun time and you can make things!'
- Pupils in Year 6 in particular consistently display their work neatly. This demonstrates their good attitudes to their learning. However, these high standards of presentation are not consistent throughout the school, reflecting minor variation in teachers' expectations and pupils' attitudes to learning.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. School records confirm that behaviour is good over time.
- Pupils and almost all parents agree that the school ensures that pupils are well behaved. Pupils have a good understanding of the school rules and the consequences of breaking them.
- Good behaviour in lessons ensures that pupils learn well, without interruptions or distractions.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school and when they are gathered together for collective worship. A member of the local clergy led a moving act of collective worship where pupils were confident to take the lead in reading their own prayers and singing solos.
- Pupils play well together in the playgrounds and are a very happy and calm community in the dining hall. They show responsible attitudes at lunchtime, which is a good social time for pupils.
- All pupils start school and end their playtime in a quiet and sensible manner. Routines for the end of playtime are clear and pupils know what is expected of them. As a result they settle down quickly to their learning.
- Pupils speak with pride about their school and are keen to talk about how safe they feel and how much they appreciate their teachers. They enjoy their responsibilities as school councillors, collective worship representatives and in looking after younger pupils. They have no complaints about the way they are treated or their learning. All pupils spoken with were aware of healthy lifestyles and healthy eating. Pupils contribute well to improvements in the school, for example in developing the forest school and environmental developments.
- Attendance has improved and is in line with the national average. The school actively promotes regular attendance and punctuality and checks the reasons for absence, and also shares attendance figures with parents.

## Outcomes for pupils

## are good

- Outcomes for pupils have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils currently in the school make good progress from their starting points and are well prepared for their secondary education.
- In 2015, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the early years was above the national average. This represents good progress from their typically average attainment on entry. Furthermore, the gap in attainment between girls and boys is much narrower at this school than it is nationally.
- There was also a considerable improvement in the performance of Year 1 pupils. The proportion of pupils passing the phonics check was slightly above the national average in 2015 and the highest percentage ever achieved at the school. The school has made the teaching of phonics a priority. Current learning shows the improved teaching is having a positive impact on reading standards throughout Key Stage 1.
- Standards by the end of Year 2 were broadly average in 2015, but this cohort was very low-attaining when they joined Year 1. In fact, only 6 per cent had achieved a good level of development when they left the Reception class.
- Last year there were very few pupils in Year 6. Nevertheless, despite the very small numbers making national comparisons unreliable, some impressive outcomes were achieved. There is an upward trend with three years of improvements at Key Stage 2 since the last inspection. Work seen of current pupils shows this trend is continuing.
- As a consequence of the improvements in teaching secured since the previous inspection, pupils' achievement has improved considerably. Compelling evidence for pupils' good progress is seen in the work in pupils' books, which show good and often rapid progress in a range of subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils attain as well as other pupils in the school because they make similarly good progress to others. The gap between their attainment and other pupils nationally continues to close. However, the very small numbers involved means that comparisons are sometimes difficult to make.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress because they receive effective, well-targeted help. Their needs are accurately identified and appropriate support is provided.
- The impact of good quality teaching in grammar, punctuation and spelling and good leadership in mathematics are evident in pupils' increasingly good progress in these areas.
- The most-able pupils achieve well in almost all classes. There are some good examples of challenge in the work for these pupils. For example, the most-able pupils in Year 6 made outstanding progress when tackling work to explore and explain the surface area of 3D shapes. Leaders have correctly identified that



higher expectations should be more consistent in each class to ensure that the most-able pupils are encouraged to make more rapid progress.

## Early years provision

is good

- Children start in the early years with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age, particularly in their reading and writing skills.
- Children make good progress and those who are behind catch up quickly. By the end of the Reception Year in 2015 the proportion of children who reached a good level of development was above the national average. This was a considerable improvement from the previous year. Children did well in all areas of development. Children are well prepared to continue their education in Year 1.
- The impact of good leadership and management is evident in children's improved achievement. Staff work well as a team and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Stimulating activities are planned that take the interests of the children into account so they are motivated and engaged in their learning. Reading and writing, including phonics, are taught well and children are given a wealth of opportunities to use their developing skills. A love of reading is promoted from the moment children start school.
- Adults use assessments well to plan the next steps for children's learning. All groups, including disadvantaged children and children who have special educational needs or disability, make similar good progress because adults meet their needs well.
- There are good opportunities for children to learn and play inside and outside the classroom. The outdoor environment provides children with good opportunities to explore nature. They develop their imaginative and creative skills as well as developing enquiring minds and the ability to work things out for themselves.
- Children learn to work and play together well. They are caring and supportive of each other. They are visibly happy and enjoy all that they do. They quickly develop good levels of confidence and independence. One little girl delighted in dancing with the inspector in the 'Strictly Come Dancing Area'. Occasionally, staff do not step in rapidly enough when a child is losing interest.
- Behaviour is good. Children are encouraged to be 'Star of the Week'. Children begin to recognise the British value of democracy as they vote for their 'Star'.
- Staff create a welcoming atmosphere so children start the day happily and settle quickly into the routines. Adults know the children well and there are good procedures to get to know them and their families before they start at school.
- Children's health, safety and well-being are paramount. Safeguarding policies are fully adhered to and arrangements for reporting concerns are clear and understood by all. Conscientious staff ensure that children are very well supervised to ensure that they are safe.
- A specialist sports teacher delivers lessons that engender a love of physical activity.
- Good relationships with parents ensure that they are well informed about their children's progress and can work in partnership with the school to support their children's learning. One parent wrote that that 'My son in Reception is thriving and learning so much. He loves coming home and telling me what they have done from welly walks, sitting by a fire in forest school and new stories to teaching me maths!'

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123775
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10009223

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	150
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ted Allen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Norma Anselm
<b>Telephone number</b>	01749 830447
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<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19–20 March 2014

## Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized primary school.
- On 1 November 2014, Evercreech Church of England Primary and Lovington Church of England Primary Schools linked together to create the Fosse Federation. One governing body oversees the strategic direction and support to the executive headteacher, who provides the day-to-day leadership at both schools.
- From September 2015, the headteacher of Evercreech became the executive headteacher of The Fosse Federation of Schools and the leadership across both schools is shared with the assistant headteacher.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average (pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and those who are looked after by the local authority).
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak or are believed to speak English as an additional language is also broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below the national average. The proportion identified for additional support through School Action Plus or with an education, health and care plan is just below average.
- In 2015 the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school provides a daily breakfast and after-school club.



## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all classes and almost all were carried out with the executive headteacher or the assistant headteacher.
- The inspector talked to pupils about their work and looked at the work in pupils' books. He also observed pupils at playtimes and lunchtimes and asked them for their views on the school.
- The inspector also heard some pupils read.
- An act of collective worship and the breakfast club were also observed.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher and other staff with key leadership responsibilities.
- Discussions were held with governors. No representative from the local authority was available.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documents, including: the school's own check on its performance and the quality of teaching, the school development plan, governor meeting minutes, information on pupils' progress, and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- The inspector looked at the 31 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, including all the written comments. He also spoke to some parents at the start and end of the school day. Additionally he looked at 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Steve Bywater, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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