

# Down Ampney Church of England Primary School

Down Ampney, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 5QR

## Inspection dates

18–19 October 2016

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils, especially the most able, do not make the progress of which they are capable. This is because teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough.
- Work set for pupils is not sufficiently matched to their abilities to ensure that they are challenged to think more deeply.
- Pupils' attainment is too low by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6.
- Leadership capacity is hampered by the school's current partnership with a local primary school. This is because the two schools have different needs, which limits the support available to Down Ampney.
- Leaders do not have sufficiently clear oversight of the early years. As a result, they are unclear about the quality of teaching and the progress made by children.
- Until recently, assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress have not been robust enough to ensure that targets are ambitious and pupils are empowered to achieve them.
- Pupils' phonics and number skills are not sufficiently well developed. Leaders recognise this and have taken action to improve them.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are not sufficiently well developed to ensure that they are self-reliant, curious and excited about their learning.

### The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher has implemented key changes so that teaching and behaviour have improved under her leadership.
- Governors are now providing a greater level of challenge to senior leaders and fulfilling a more proactive, strategic role.
- The curriculum enables pupils to explore interesting topics through a range of interlinked subjects.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils, receive an effective level of personalised support which helps them to make more rapid progress.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate and honest understanding of the school's weaknesses. This is helping governors to tackle weaknesses in a decisive, purposeful way.
- Pupils currently in the school are now making better progress as a result of improved teaching.
- Teachers have a confident, assured grasp of their subjects. They communicate key skills and knowledge with energy and enthusiasm.
- The school now receives effective support from the local authority and its education adviser.
- Attendance is above average overall and for different groups of pupils.

## Full report

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

- Raise achievement by ensuring that:
  - pupils' phonics and number skills are secure throughout the school
  - teachers have the highest expectations of pupils and set more challenging targets
  - staff use assessments to regularly track the progress pupils make and intervene swiftly when they fall behind
  - teachers set work that is matched to the needs of pupils, particularly the most able.
- Improve leadership by ensuring that governors take further action to strengthen leadership capacity.
- Improve leadership of the early years by:
  - ensuring that leaders gain an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and its impact upon children's achievement
  - implementing effective plans for improvement that tackle current weaknesses.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management Requires improvement

- Until the appointment of the executive headteacher in September 2015, pupils were not making sufficient progress in all their subjects. This is because leaders' expectations of staff and pupils were not high enough, and the quality of teaching was not good enough.
- The monitoring of teaching and tracking of pupil progress were not effective until the executive headteacher raised expectations and implemented changes to these processes. As a result, since the last inspection, teaching has failed to meet adequately the needs of different groups of pupils, especially the most able.
- The capacity of senior leaders to improve the school is hampered by the school's partnership with another local primary school. This arrangement lessens the amount of time and support that the executive headteacher has available to improve the school. Although there is evidence of clear improvement, the executive headteacher is frustrated that improvements are not taking place more rapidly.
- Leaders rightly acknowledge that pupils' phonics and number skills are still not sufficiently well developed across the school and have taken action to address this. However, there has been insufficient action since the time of the last inspection to prioritise these skills. As a result, pupils have not made the progress that they are capable of.
- Leaders now have an accurate, honest and well-informed understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This is because they understand that openness, resilience and a willingness to confront what is not good enough are critical to moving the school forward.
- The executive headteacher has made key improvements since she took up post. She knows what needs to improve, has raised expectations of staff and made strong teaching appointments. Working with the school community, the executive headteacher has created a culture that is based on key values, such as respect and tolerance. As a result, behaviour has improved significantly in the last year.
- The local authority is now providing a high level of support to the school, although this is fairly recent. The authority was initially slow to recognise that pupils were not making enough progress since the last inspection and to act upon this realisation. However, since that time, support has been strong. The education adviser has worked closely with leaders to create and monitor a suitable action plan for improvement. She has also provided training to teaching staff and to governors which has helped to improve practice.
- The additional funding the school receives to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and pupils' experience of sport is well used. This is because funding enables dedicated staff with particular expertise to assist pupils in small groups. This approach provides a high level of personalised support. Consequently, all groups make more rapid progress in their learning and participate in sport activities to a greater degree.
- The curriculum enables pupils to develop skills and acquire knowledge across a range of subjects. Themes studied in topic lessons are carefully chosen so that they can be taught from the perspective of different subjects. For example, the Ancient Egypt topic features aspects of geography – 'Why was the Nile so important?' Pupils also learn about aspects

of Ancient Egypt's culture and social history, considering, for example, the social hierarchy according to which people lived their lives. In addition, the topic provides opportunities to explore art and music.

### **Governance of the school**

- Since the last inspection, the governing body has been slow to drive improvement in the school. Prior to the appointment of the current chair of governors, governance did not make sufficient demands of senior leaders and hold them to account for pupils' lack of progress.
- Since the appointment of the new chair of governors, however, governance has improved. This is because the chair understands the importance of raising pupils' achievement and having the highest expectations of senior leaders. She also applies these standards to governance, so that the make-up of the governing body now reflects her expectations. Governors are now asking the necessary challenging questions of senior leaders about the key issues that matter, particularly achievement. Governors are taking a more proactive strategic role to help support and challenge leaders to drive improvements in the school.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils in the school are well known to staff, who are not only vigilant, but knowledgeable about pupils' circumstances and issues that might affect them. All staff have had appropriate training to recognise signs of abuse and know the procedures to follow should they have concerns. Governors have also had appropriate training where necessary. The checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with pupils are comprehensive and up to date.
- The school site is a safe environment for pupils. Fencing is appropriate and external doors and gates are secure, so that people arriving at and leaving the school are appropriately managed. This enables pupils to freely move around the school site. The executive headteacher has worked effectively with parents to understand the importance of following school procedures and coming in to school by the correct route.
- Pupils who spoke to the lead inspector unanimously reported that they feel safe. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the Ofsted online survey Parent View stated that they strongly agreed that their child is safe.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** Requires improvement

- Pupils are not being stretched in lessons because the work that teachers set does not always meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. This means that the most able pupils are not pushed to think more deeply and make rapid advances in their learning.
- Teachers are not using assessment accurately or regularly enough to track the progress of key groups of pupils, including the most able and the most able disadvantaged. As a result, their targets are not high enough and teachers are not sufficiently aware that these pupils should be making better progress. Furthermore, pupils who spoke to the lead inspector reported that they feel challenged only some of the time.
- Although the quality of teaching has recently improved, and continues to do so, weaker teaching since the last inspection has not enabled pupils to fulfil their potential and make the progress of which they are capable.

- The support of teaching assistants is not always used to best effect in the classroom to maximise the progress made by pupils, particularly the most able.
- Teachers know their subjects well and this allows them to teach with confidence in an animated way. As a result, pupils are starting to enjoy their learning more.
- Teachers' use of feedback, in line with the school's policy, is helping pupils to improve their work. This is because the advice they provide on a regular basis is straightforward, succinct and practical. Pupils are clear about what they are being asked to do. The advice that teachers offer is made more effective because they sometimes provide examples and model the way in which they want pupils to improve their work.
- Furthermore, teachers expect pupils to respond regularly to this feedback to demonstrate that they understand the advice and can apply it to their work. Pupils' books show that the advice they receive is helping them to spot their own mistakes and edit their work to incorporate improvements. This approach is helping pupils to become more self-reliant.
- Pupils enjoy positive relationships with staff. This is because staff are enthusiastic in their approach and provide a high level of personalised support when pupils get stuck. Teachers use appropriate vocabulary and specialist terminology in their work, and do not patronise pupils.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare Requires improvement**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Until recently, pupils' personal development was hindered because staff did not have high enough expectations of pupils. As a result, pupils did not aspire to achieve their best and lacked the assertiveness and desire to aim high.
- The culture based upon key values established by the executive headteacher has raised pupils' expectations of themselves. However, this work is too recent for impact to be fully evident. As a result, pupils still need to become more self-assured, and develop greater self-belief, so that they can achieve more than they thought possible.
- Pupils are beginning to take more responsibility for their learning. This is because teachers are encouraging them to work more independently and to make better use of resources around the classroom. However, pupils' attitudes to learning are not sufficiently well developed. They do not currently exhibit a deep intellectual curiosity and love of learning.
- Leaders have made the most of the school environment to ensure that it is bright and attractive and celebrates learning. The arrangement of buildings and spaces does not make this easy. However, where space is available, leaders have ensured that pupils benefit from seeing other pupils' best work and have access to resources that assist their learning.
- Staff are caring towards pupils. The small number of pupils in the school enables staff to provide a high level of individual attention. As a result, pupils report that there is always a member of staff on hand to offer help should they need it.
- Pupils report that there is little bullying in the school and that when it does occur it is dealt with effectively by staff. Parents who responded to the Parent View survey also stated that bullying is effectively dealt with by staff.

- Pupils' understanding of British values is developing as a result of the values that underpin the school's culture. Pupils are able to relate these values to assembly themes and work in lessons. For instance, when pupils watch Newsround in personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) lessons, they consider global issues through the lens of values such as tolerance and democracy. In religious education, pupils consider thought-provoking questions, such as, 'Why is it important to have justice in the world?'

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Although behaviour has improved significantly since the appointment of the executive headteacher, it is not yet good. This is because there are still instances of off-task behaviour in lessons where pupils are not sufficiently challenged and lose concentration.
- Although pupils now treat each other with greater consideration and respect, they do not always behave appropriately around the school site. For example, an inspector observing pupils having lunch noticed that they were unable to hear their names being called on a register because they were being too noisy. On another occasion, a couple of children in the early years were observed running in a place where they should not have been running.
- Nevertheless, pupils now have a much clearer idea about the behaviour expected of them because leaders and staff communicate, and uphold, higher standards. The management of behaviour is informed by the values at the centre of the school's culture and pupils' positive behaviour is rewarded accordingly. For example, pupils receive awards in assembly if they have 'lived' the values of the school, such as showing kindness or persisting with something difficult.
- Attendance is a strength in the school. Overall absence and absence for groups of pupils are below average and have been so over time. No pupils are persistently absent.
- Pupils are now taking greater pride in their work in the upper years. It is well presented and shows that pupils are making an effort to use neat, well-crafted handwriting, to underline titles and space work out correctly. This high-quality presentation is not as evident in the lower year groups.

## **Outcomes for pupils**

## **Require improvement**

- The attainment of pupils when they leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2 has been below average in all their subjects over time.
- Until recently, pupils have not been making sufficient progress in any of their subjects. As a result of the higher-quality teaching provided by new staff, current pupils in the school are now making better progress.
- Too few pupils are meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics test over time. Leaders rightly recognise that pupils' understanding of phonics is underdeveloped across the school and have taken action to address these shortcomings. For example, pupils now receive frequent, regular homework that focuses upon exercises to improve spelling and phonics skills.
- The most able pupils, including the very small number of most-able disadvantaged pupils, although making progress, are not achieving their potential. This is because assessment is not sharp enough, and teaching not challenging enough, to ensure that these pupils excel and achieve the highest standards.

- Pupils' achievement in mathematics requires improvement because pupils are not able to manipulate numbers and work with calculations at the right level. Leaders have recognised this weakness and, to overcome it, have introduced more regular homework, alongside the phonics homework, to strengthen pupils' number skills.
- The few disadvantaged pupils in the school are making stronger progress now because they receive one-to-one personalised intervention from a well-qualified member of staff. This is helping them to catch up.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported so that they are now producing work of better quality. This is because interventions provided outside of the classroom are well matched to the teaching and work undertaken in the classroom. The higher-level teaching assistant carefully maps where pupils are in their learning and identifies what needs to happen next. As a result, pupils know their targets and produce work that is of similar standard to their peers.
- Pupils enjoy their reading and are guided to choose books that are suitably ambitious and appeal to their interests. Pupils of different abilities who read to the lead inspector read with expression in most cases. However, all of these pupils, regardless of ability, did not have sufficiently good phonics skills to enable them to navigate difficult or unfamiliar words, which affected the fluency of their reading.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly better prepared for secondary school when they leave Down Ampney. Although their achievement is still not high enough, the current school culture is effectively building pupils' confidence, resilience and aspirations. The school liaises well with partner secondary schools so that pupils experience helpful continuity from one institution to the next.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- Historically, not all children have made good progress in the early years foundation stage. Consequently, they are not prepared for Year 1. In particular, no child has exceeded the expected standard in reading, writing or mathematics.
- Staff have a strong understanding of children's development needs but assessment is not being systematically used to move children's learning forward at a fast enough pace. For example, children were observed practising forming their numbers up to five. In the case of one child, however, he could already do this and was not moved on to a more challenging activity.
- School leaders do not have a sufficiently detailed overview of the effectiveness of the early years foundation stage. An absence of strategic planning means that weaknesses in the provision are not being tackled swiftly enough.
- The teaching of phonics requires improvement. Children who already know some of their sounds are not moved on quickly to tackle other sounds that are not familiar.
- The teacher plans activities that allow pupils to explore learning in different ways. For example, some pupils were observed building towers from blocks to learn about size and shape, while others painted pictures and experimented by mixing colours. Adults' observations are informing the activities children do so that they are able to take full advantage of the learning environment.
- The teacher and teaching assistants help children to engage with their learning and develop their thinking. They do this by asking questions that prompt children to consider different choices and to speculate about different outcomes.

- The early years team is developing a rich and stimulating environment. Both inside and outside areas are set up to enliven children's curiosity so that they are keen to explore different areas of learning, including language development. The teacher is broadening children's awareness of language by teaching them Spanish, so that they are able to say 'good morning', 'good afternoon' and 'good night' in this language.
- Adults are well trained about the procedures in place to keep children safe at school. Both indoor and outdoor learning environments are well organised. Staff have quickly established good routines to ensure that children behave well and tidy up in order to keep spaces clear and safe.



## School details

Unique reference number	115664
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10000487

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	41
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Penny Morse
Executive headteacher	Wendy Foster
Telephone number	01793750294
Website	<a href="http://www.downampney.gloucs.sch.uk">www.downampney.gloucs.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@downampney.gloucs.sch.uk">admin@downampney.gloucs.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	28–29 November 2011

## Information about this school

- Down Ampney Church of England Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The current executive headteacher took up post in September 2015.
- The deputy headteacher took up post in September 2016.
- The majority of pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is just below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who receive support is in line with the national average. There are no pupils currently in the school with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the

minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum and pupil premium on its website. Leaders have taken action to address this.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, pupils, representatives of the governing body and the improvement adviser for the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation. These included the school's self-evaluation and school development plan, governing body minutes, local authority reports, attendance records and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and observed their conduct at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took account of 18 responses to the online Parent View survey.

## Inspection team

Steve Smith, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tracy Hannon

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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