

Courtney Primary School

Courtney Road, Kingswood, Bristol BS15 9RD

Inspection dates

24–25 January 2017

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

- The school's effectiveness declined after the previous inspection. The new headteacher has taken rapid action, but some improvements are too new to have had a proven impact and others are not yet consistently effective.
- Pupils now in Year 5 and Year 6 made weak progress across key stage 2, particularly in mathematics and writing, and they have only recently begun to catch up.
- Teaching and assessment are not consistently good across subjects and across the school. In mathematics and writing, the work set is sometimes too easy or too hard.
- The curriculums for mathematics and science have been improved but not fully implemented.
- Leaders and governors do not have a clear picture of which changes are having the greatest effect on pupils' progress.
- The behaviour of pupils is not consistently good. Pupils say that a few of them continue to behave unkindly, even though teachers have taken action.
- Leaders do not routinely analyse the information in log books to check if actions taken to improve the behaviour of individual pupils have been successful.
- Teaching is not challenging children in the early years, particularly the most able, to make the progress they could.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and senior leaders have an ambitious vision for improvement. Recent actions are improving progress for many pupils.
- Strong assessment and extra support this year have helped pupils in Year 6 to make good progress towards their targets.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able of them, now make stronger progress because of targeted support.
- Skilled teaching assistants help pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make good progress and be included in all aspects of school life.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They take pride in their work. They use the feedback from their teachers to correct and improve their work.
- In 2016, standards at the end of Year 2 rose and were above national standards.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all pupils make consistently good progress in writing and mathematics by:
 - systematically teaching skills of problem-solving and reasoning across the school
 - providing work that takes account of pupils' starting points so that those pupils who need to improve basic sentence-writing skills catch up quickly
 - ensuring that teachers' skills in assessing pupils' work are consistently good.
- Improve the quality of leadership by:
 - more clearly evaluating whether new initiatives are raising standards and improving progress for all groups of pupils currently in the school
 - ensuring that improvements to the mathematics and science curriculums are fully implemented and consistently promote pupils' progress.
- Improve the behaviour of the few pupils who persistently misbehave by:
 - ensuring that the consequences for poor behaviour are clear to pupils and consistently applied
 - routinely analysing behaviour logs so that leaders can identify whether their actions are improving behaviour over time and what more needs to be done.
- Improve the progress that children, including the most able children, make in early years by:
 - making better use of assessment information to plan more precisely for children with different starting points
 - providing more challenging opportunities for children to explore and develop their ideas when they play.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- In the period following the previous inspection, the quality of education in the school declined. Since then, the school has experienced a number of changes to staff. The situation is stabilising, but these changes have hindered the speed and consistency with which the new headteacher has been able to bring about improvements.
- The school's self-evaluation is extensive, but is not linking changes made to teaching or the curriculum to the impact on pupils' progress. Consequently, leaders' reports to governors are not precise about whether standards are rising as a result of the actions they have taken.
- The curriculum has recently undergone development so that it better reflects new programmes of study and pupils' interests. However, the new curriculum for mathematics is not yet fully implemented. Equally, improvements to the curriculum for science are very recent.
- Although school leaders have rigorous processes for recording incidents of poor behaviour and parents' concerns, they are not evaluating these to see if actions taken are leading to the eradication of unacceptable behaviour. Log books show that although most pupils' behaviour is good, overall behaviour requires improvement.
- 'I think the new headteacher has come in with some great ideas and has improved the school' is a comment typical of many from parents. The school's recent survey of parents' views indicates that they are positive about changes, particularly about improvements in their children's progress and improved communication from school. Nonetheless, other sources of parents' views, including discussions with parents, show that not all parents believe that the school's actions to tackle bullying are effective.
- While the impact of leadership is not yet consistently good, staff are wholly positive about the drive for improvement and the rigorous programme of professional development which leaders have put in place.
- There are clear signs of the impact of improved teaching in some parts of the school. In 2016, the standards pupils reached at the end of Year 2 were above national levels and represented good progress. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the phonics check was also above national average.
- Recently, sharply focused plans for the spending of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils have led to stronger progress for this group of pupils. Equally, leaders have set aspirational targets for the current Year 6 pupils and, with good teaching, precise assessment and support, these pupils are also making rapid progress from a low starting point.
- Overall, the curriculum has a positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In personal and social education, pupils reflect on 'big issues', such as conservation and homelessness, in this country and globally. The school's values of resilience and fairness are taught and rewarded in special assemblies. These events and regular elections, such as to the school council, prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.

- Pupils believe that the school is fair. Equality of opportunity is promoted well, particularly through the strong and effective support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The sports premium is used well to help pupils to stay fit and to develop their enthusiasm for sport. The newly introduced curriculum for physical education is enhanced by many after-school sports clubs and opportunities for competition.
- The local authority has helped focus improvements on the quality of governance and on the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has undergone change, with new parent governors recently joining and some vacancies still to fill. Governors regularly undertake training, including for safeguarding.
- Support from the local authority for analysing the school's end-of-year assessment information has given governors a fuller picture of the school's effectiveness. Nevertheless, governors do not receive enough information from leaders about the progress of all groups of pupils currently in school. Consequently, opportunities for governors to challenge are limited. Where they do have that information, for example on plans and progress for disadvantaged pupils, they are beginning to check for impact on pupils' progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders work as a team to promote a culture that protects children who are at risk of harm. Staff, including those who have only recently joined the school, understand the risks that pupils could be exposed to, including exposure to extreme ideas. They are confident to report their concerns and say that they are given feedback on the action school leaders take.
- Procedures for recruiting staff are rigorous and the school's business manager is systematic in recording checks on all adults who work with pupils, including volunteers.
- The family link worker has strong links with outside agencies and gives support to families who need it. This includes working with and challenging parents if pupils are absent from school; as a result, the attendance of some groups of pupils is improving.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, although improving, is not consistently good. There is still too much variability over the school and across subjects. Improvements to teaching in some subjects have been very recent. Leaders recognise that the turnover of teachers has meant that their expectations for good teaching and assessment have not yet been securely embedded.

- Teaching does not use precise assessment well enough to plan tasks which take account of pupils' different starting points. Teachers sometime pitch writing activities beyond those pupils who are still catching up in using basic punctuation and developing sentence structure.
- Teachers do not teach problem-solving and the development of reasoning in mathematics as well as they teach calculation. Consequently, there is insufficient challenge, particularly for the most able pupils. However, the improved teaching programme for mathematics, where it is taught well, is successfully raising standards.
- The quality of teaching in science has declined since the last inspection. The curriculum for science has been reviewed and teachers are now more consistent in how they teach scientific enquiry. However, these improvements are relatively new and, as yet, teaching does not engage pupils sufficiently well or give them enough opportunities to apply their writing skills.
- There is now some good practice where teachers plan from very precise assessment of pupils' next steps. This is particularly true of teaching in Year 6, where the impact of weaker teaching over time has led to pupils falling behind.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge of English grammar and guide pupils to make their writing more accurate and engaging. Most pupils in Years 5 and 6 now understand grammar at the level expected for their age. For example, a pupil described a modal verb as 'changing the possibility of something'. Equally, pupils in Year 5 knew that emotive language could persuade customers to visit their leisure attraction. The most able pupils, in particular, are responding well to the raised pitch of teaching.
- Effective teaching of phonics means that most pupils in Year 1 are on track to reach the expected standard. Where pupils need to catch up in Year 2, skilled teaching assistants help them to sound letters accurately and apply them in reading.
- Pupils and parents are very positive about the recent improvements to teaching.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are keen learners and are responding well to the raised expectations of their teachers. Their workbooks show how diligent they are in their lessons and their neat and careful presentation shows pride in their work.
- When improvements are presented as challenges, for example the challenge to read five times a week, pupils respond with enthusiasm. Increasingly, they are contributing imaginatively to new topics by reading and researching at home. They are keen to gain house points and wait 'with fingers crossed' to see if their house has been successful.
- Pupils relish opportunities to take up leadership positions on the school council and the eco-council. They take part enthusiastically in the wide range of clubs which the school offers after school.

- The school's teaching on health and well-being prepares pupils for their adult life. Year 6 pupils, for example, can build on their visit to a life skills centre to explain how they would make good lifestyle choices.
- The vast majority of parents feel that their children are safe and happy in the school. Pupils mostly agree that they feel safe and well supported by adults, including midday supervisors. However, the behaviour of a small group of pupils has unsettled some of their classmates.
- Pupils are taught well how to stay safe, particularly on the internet and with new technologies. Pupils can describe the risks of giving out personal information online and the danger that people might not be who they say they are.
- Parents are guided well about how to keep their children safe online. However, despite the school's efforts, a few older pupils are not using social media appropriately outside school. This sometimes has an impact on relationships between pupils in the school. Leaders are responding robustly to this situation with targeted support for pupils and families.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because a few pupils repeat behaviours which are unacceptable and cause concern to some pupils and parents.
- Discussions with parents and checks on Parent View, the online parents' questionnaire, showed that there was a mixed response about the school's effectiveness in tackling allegations of bullying. Parents agree that concerns are investigated, but some pupils do not maintain the promised improvements to behaviour. Conversely, the school's survey of parents' views indicates that parents are more positive about the overall behaviour in the school.
- Leaders do not routinely analyse behaviour logs, so they do not have evidence of the impact of the actions they have taken. The consequences for repeated poor behaviour are not clear and are not having a consistent impact.
- Almost all pupils understand the rules regarding behaviour and respond well to the school's expectations. They agree that pupils behave well in lessons and feel that learning is not regularly disrupted. This was confirmed by inspectors.
- Generally, the school is an orderly community and pupils are polite to adults. They move around corridors, the lunch hall and the playground sensibly. They come back in from breaks calmly and settle swiftly to their lessons.
- On the playground, pupils have good opportunities for energetic play and vigilant midday supervisors are present to spot any potential problems. They swiftly intervene to stop boisterous behaviour and pupils quickly respond. Pupils are happy in breakfast club where the behaviour is good.
- When pupils have challenging behaviours as a result of special educational needs and/or disabilities, they are skilfully supported by staff in class and on the playground.
- In 2016, levels of attendance were broadly in line with the national average. The school is rigorously tackling the absence of disadvantaged pupils, and the attendance for some is improving rapidly. Where it is not improving, the school is continuing to provide support and challenge.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because there remains a legacy of underachievement that has still to be fully overcome. After a period of decline since the previous inspection, pupils currently in the school are beginning to catch up. However, in September 2016, the percentage of pupils moving into Years 4, 5 and 6 with the skills and knowledge expected for their age was very low, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- The percentage of pupils who reached the combined expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2 in 2016 was lower than the national average.
- Progress across the school and for different groups is still too variable. Pupils' workbooks show that those who need to catch up from a low starting point in writing are not overcoming basic errors of punctuation and sentence structure. In some cases, the progress pupils currently in key stage 1 are making in mathematics is limited by their slow acquisition of skills of problem-solving and reasoning.
- Outcomes in science require improvement from the very low levels that were seen in teacher assessments for Year 6 in 2016. Improvements to teaching have been recent and too many pupils do not have the expected levels of knowledge and skills.
- For most pupils, however, particularly the most able, progress in writing is now good. The new, more challenging teaching is giving pupils technical skills and good vocabulary to express their ideas at standards in line with and sometimes above those expected for their age.
- The best progress in mathematics is being made in Years 3 to 6, where the new programme for teaching is used more consistently and pupils, including the most able, are more systematically gaining skills of problem-solving and reasoning.
- Pupils who read to inspectors did so fluently and the younger pupils were keen readers. Most pupils are rising to the school's rewards and challenge to read more widely.
- Accurate assessment is helping teachers to identify the gaps in understanding for pupils in the current Year 6. Precise teaching and additional support is now improving the progress for this group of pupils and will support their movement to the next stage of their education.
- Disadvantaged pupils have benefited considerably from additional support and the more precise identification of the gaps in their knowledge and skills. From different starting points, their progress is improving and the most able disadvantaged pupils are making particularly rapid progress towards greater depth in their learning.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. Most access the lessons well and apply the skills gained in their support groups to their class work.
- In 2016, standards at the end of Year 2, at the expected level and at greater depth, were above national levels. All groups of pupils made strong progress.

- The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the phonics check in Year 1 was higher than national levels. Current pupils are acquiring phonic knowledge rapidly and, with additional support, those in Year 2 who need to catch up are doing so.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Teaching in the early years requires improvement. Teachers do not design activities well enough to excite children and give them opportunities to work together, explore and apply their new skills. Teachers plan 'challenge' activities but there is currently no information to show that these challenges are moving children on quickly in their learning.
- The proportion of children who reached a good level of development in 2016 was in line with national levels. However, the most able children did not reach the standards of which they were capable.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what children should do. Although children stop their activities promptly at 'tidy-up time', routines for putting away equipment are not well established and adults do most of the clearing up.
- The leadership of the early years is in transition to a new leader. Changes have been made to the way teachers assess children's knowledge and understanding. However, these assessments are still not sharp enough for teachers to plan for the challenge which the most able children need.
- The starting points for children in the Reception class are very wide. Some can talk confidently, count to twenty, and know some letter sounds. Others have developmental needs requiring support, but broadly most start school with good self-help skills and are ready to listen and learn. Teaching does not meet the needs of this wide range of abilities effectively enough.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in the Reception class are very well supported. Skilled teaching assistants guide their play and help the children to maintain interest in activities such as finding numbers buried in the sand.
- Children behave well and keep themselves safe. There is a calm and orderly atmosphere in the classroom and outdoor area. Children cooperate well in their play and try hard when working with teachers on number and writing tasks.
- Phonics is taught well and children are beginning to apply their knowledge of letters in their writing. Most can now add two numbers to make ten and represent them in an addition sum. These skills and their good behaviour prepare them for Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	109054
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10005705

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	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Hinchcliffe
Headteacher	Deborah Wood
Telephone number	01454 866670
Website	www.courtneyprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	office@courtneyps.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 May 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The new headteacher joined the school in September 2015. The leadership team includes the deputy headteacher who has been a leader in the school for some years. There has been a significant turnover of staff in recent years. The leader for mathematics was new in post in September 2016.
- The school is an average-sized primary school. The majority of the pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much lower than the national level but it is increasing.
- There is a higher percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities than the national average, and also a higher percentage with education, health and care plans.

- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is broadly in line with national average.
- The school population is relatively stable and fewer pupils move in and out of the school mid year than was the case at the previous inspection.
- The governing body manages a breakfast club and after-school care.
- The school met the floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress, in 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across all year groups and classes, almost always jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors examined work in pupils' books in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Meetings were held with leaders and with members of the governing body. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with two officers from the local authority.
- Inspectors had meetings with two groups of pupils and spoke to others in the breakfast club, in lessons, in the lunch hall and on the playground. Pupils' views in the 22 pupil questionnaires returned were also taken into account.
- The views expressed in questionnaires returned by 22 members of the school staff were considered.
- The 47 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire were taken into account. Inspectors also spoke with parents and carers and considered a letter handed to them.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documentation, including assessments of pupils' progress.
- The school's safeguarding procedures were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Wendy Marriott, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Fox	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Ivermee	Ofsted Inspector

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