

Curry Rivel Church of England VC Primary School

Church Street, Curry Rivel, Langport, Somerset TA10 0HD

Inspection dates

7–8 March 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	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils’ achievement in key stage 2, particularly in Years 4 and 5, is not as good as it should be. Pupils do not make sufficient progress.
- Attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics are not high enough to ensure that pupils, including the most able, are prepared well enough for the next stage of their education when they leave school.
- Since the previous inspection, teaching has not been consistently effective to ensure a good rate of progress for all groups of pupils, including the small number of disadvantaged pupils.
- There is insufficient challenge in some of the learning staff plan, particularly in writing, to enable pupils to reach their full potential.
- Although the school identifies those pupils who would benefit from additional support, assessment is not used well enough to ensure that the learning needs of pupils are met as well as they might be.
- Changes in staffing since the last inspection have had a negative impact on leaders’ capacity to maintain and build on some of the school’s previous strengths.
- The senior leadership team is relatively new in personnel and structure, and not yet having a sustained impact on the areas requiring improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils in key stage 1, and children in the Nursery and Reception, make good progress, as the result of good teaching.
- Pupils benefit from strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils behave well and they enjoy the range of activities in the curriculum. They feel safe and well cared for. Parents are very supportive of the school.
- Governance has improved and is now more effective in holding leaders to account for the school’s performance.
- Recent improvements show that the school has the capacity to improve further.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and the rate of pupils' progress in key stage 2, especially in Years 4 and 5, by:
 - providing a more consistent level of challenge to enable pupils to reach their potential in all subjects
 - making better use of assessment in planning effectively to meet the differing learning needs of pupils of all abilities, including the most able.
- Strengthen progress in English by providing more depth and challenge in writing tasks for older pupils.
- Further consolidate the senior leadership roles to speed up the rate at which the school improves.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- A number of staff changes since the previous inspection have had a negative impact on leaders' capacity to build on the previous strengths of the school, rectify recent underachievement and move the school further forwards. The relatively newly restructured leadership team has not yet fully implemented all the changes it recognises as necessary to ensure improved outcomes, especially in pupils' progress.
- The school has not ensured good progress for pupils in key stage 2, including the most able, middle-attaining and disadvantaged pupils. Progress in English and mathematics has not been good enough, especially in Years 4 and 5. Weaknesses in attainment and progress were evident not only in last year's test results but also before that.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths has been overgenerous. School leaders recognise those areas that still need improvement, but have based some of their evaluation on aspirations to be achieved rather than on the reality of how well the school has performed in recent times.
- The school has adopted teaching and learning approaches which are popular with pupils, such as the Forest School and an approach of 'active learning through exploration and play' lower down the school. However, the curriculum is not yet as effective as it should be in producing good outcomes in core subjects by the time pupils leave Year 6. This means that pupils are not as well prepared for the next stage of their education as they should be.
- School leaders have maintained some of the strengths identified at the previous inspection, notably the good progress in the early years and in key stage 1.
- The headteacher has introduced more rigorous measures to check the quality of teaching and learning and to assess pupils' progress. The school uses the results, for example to provide more support for those pupils with particular learning needs. The school now uses the pupil premium and funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities more effectively to support pupils.
- Leaders use the primary sport funding well to increase sporting opportunities for pupils and to increase staff expertise. For example, the school buys in expertise and coaching to strengthen staff confidence and teaching skills in physical education.
- Staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, within the school's Christian ethos –for example, through church members delivering assemblies. The school also emphasises the importance of British values such as tolerance, and pupils get on well with each other. Curry Rivel is a very inclusive school which does not tolerate discrimination.
- The school improvement plan reflects school leaders' awareness that they need to improve the school's overall performance. The fact that some improvements have already taken place, parents are very positive about the school and staff share the leadership's commitment to improvement all show that the school does have the capacity to improve further.
- The leadership now links staff pay to pupils' progress more effectively, thereby increasing staff accountability.

Governance

- Since the previous inspection, the governing body has become more knowledgeable and effective. It recognises its role in ensuring accountability for the school's performance, and has worked hard to increase its understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Governors are more aware than before of the quality of teaching in the school. They question the leadership about aspects such as the effectiveness of pupil premium funding and primary sport funding in raising standards.
- Governors receive training to ensure that they have the relevant expertise to carry out their role. They have had recent update training to ensure that they have a good understanding of safeguarding and child protection issues.
- Governors are now well placed not just to hold the school to account but to provide solid support for the school in the drive for further improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's policies on safeguarding are up to date, with detailed information to make staff aware of potential issues such as radicalisation and extremism and to advise them on how they should deal with any concerns. Staff understand their responsibilities well.
- The school gives parents useful advice on any potential issues, such as dealing sensitively with the internet. Staff also raise pupils' awareness of safeguarding issues in lessons, in assemblies and through other activities such as visits.
- The school has good relationships with outside agencies, which are called on when there are concerns, for example about absence.
- The school site is secure. The leadership keeps appropriate records of any untoward incidents in school and, where necessary, involves parents in the resolution.
- There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Parents acknowledge this, and are almost unanimous in their belief that their children are very safe and well looked after in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, teaching has not been consistently good enough in key stage 2 to ensure that older pupils make the progress they should.
- Some teachers do not have consistently high expectations of what pupils should achieve. In particular, this has adversely affected the progress of the most able pupils, who have not achieved as highly as they should in any of the core subjects. Although teaching overall has improved, there are still weaknesses, especially in Years 4 and 5, where there is not enough challenge in the learning planned for middle-ability and the most able pupils.
- Although progress in writing has improved, attainment in writing is still restricted by limited depth and challenge in the writing tasks which pupils are provided with.
- Some staff do not consistently follow the school policy on how pupils' work should be assessed and the feedback they should receive.

- Assessment of pupils' learning has become more thorough and regular and staff now have more understanding of how well each pupil is doing. Often this leads to the school providing useful support which enables disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make improved progress. However, staff do not use the assessment information consistently in their planning to ensure that pupils routinely make the progress they should.
- Learning support assistants provide effective support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and these pupils now make better progress than before.
- Teachers are benefiting from more opportunities to develop their skills, particularly in relation to the new curriculum. As a result, the teaching of mathematics and reading is improving.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils in key stage 2, other than those in Year 3, were not in school during the inspection, because they were away on a residential activity visit. However, it is clear from a range of evidence, not least from parents, that pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe and well cared for.
- Pupils have the opportunity to attend a breakfast club and an after-school activities club. There is also a range of other clubs of which there is a good take-up.
- The school is proud of its Christian ethos and its community involvement. Staff encourage pupils to take on responsibility and to care for each other.
- The school provides very good care for pupils of all backgrounds and abilities.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour well. From the evidence of the inspection, it was clear that younger pupils enjoy learning, and staff assured inspectors that this is also the case for older pupils most of the time. There have been no pupil exclusions in recent years.
- Throughout the school, pupils' positive attitudes towards learning in lessons are evident in their books. Most pupils, of all levels of ability, take pride in the way they present their work.
- Attendance in the school for most pupils is just above average, partly because the school works hard with parents to ensure regular attendance. However, the attendance of a few pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, and this hinders their progress.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment and progress require improvement because pupils in key stage 2 have not made sufficient progress for some time. This was evident in the 2016 national test results, following changes to the curriculum. However, this weakness was also evident in the previous year.

- Attainment and progress have not been strong for any group of pupils in key stage 2, despite pupils getting a good start lower down the school. Not enough of the most able pupils have attained above the expected level of achievement by the end of Year 6, and the work they do has not been routinely challenging.
- Other groups of pupils, including middle-attaining pupils, have not made the progress they should. There has been some variability between subjects, but overall too few pupils have done well enough in reading, writing and mathematics.
- A significant cause of the underachievement has been variations in the quality of teaching, particularly with regard to teachers' expectations of what pupils could achieve when building on work done lower down the school.
- School leaders have improved teaching and progress in mathematics and reading. More pupils are now on track to make better progress in these subjects. However, achievement is still not as high as it should be, because there is still a lot of 'catch-up' to do and progress in Years 4 and 5 has not been rapid enough.
- There has been some improvement in the quality of pupils' writing. However, in key stage 2 there are still weaknesses in spelling and in the technical aspects of language, and too few opportunities for writing at length and in sufficient depth.
- Some of the variations in progress between different groups have narrowed. Some disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making more progress. These pupils are benefiting from more effectively targeted support. Differences in the rate of progress between boys and girls are narrowing.
- Children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 make good progress. Pupils' progress by the end of key stage 1 has been consistently good since the previous inspection. These pupils have benefited from teachers' high expectations.

Early years provision

Good

- Children in the Nursery and Reception make good progress, as they did at the time of the previous inspection. The rate of progress has improved further. Children do particularly well in the Nursery.
- Assessment results show that by the time they leave Reception, the majority of children achieve at or close to the expected level of development for children of their age, so they are well prepared for Year 1. This is a considerable achievement, since many of the children join the Nursery with levels of personal development and skill well below what is usually expected for their age.
- Until recently there have been considerable variations in the rate of progress between boys and girls. These differences have narrowed, as staff have consciously adapted teaching and learning approaches to suit all children's needs. Teachers and support staff provide a blend of staff-led and child-initiated activities. Teaching has been consistently good.
- Staff make effective use of good outdoor facilities, including the Forest School. There are good resources for staff to practise the school philosophy of learning through play.
- There is good leadership of the early years, marked by high expectations. Staff have good opportunities to develop their skills further.

- Staff assess children's progress regularly and accurately. The learning journeys in both Nursery and Reception contain extensive evidence of various activities showing how children develop a range of skills and knowledge. However, there is relatively little evidence of early writing skills in Reception, and this remains an area for further development.
- Children behave well. Inspectors saw them socialising well and helping each other. They quickly learn what is expected of them, responding to staff well.
- Parents greatly appreciate what the early years setting provides for their children. They know that their children are safe and that they behave well. They also appreciate that their children enjoy school and that the school welcomes them into the early years setting to celebrate their children's work and to support them.

School details

Unique reference number	123752
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10002960

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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	153
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ginny Smith
Headteacher	Peter Staddon
Telephone number	01458 251 404
Website	www.curryrivelprimary.somerset.org.uk
Email address	office@curryrivel.somerset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–27 June 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The great majority of pupils come from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is close to average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is below average.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress for pupils by the end of Year 6.
- There are five mixed-age classes. Children in Reception attend full time.
- The school supports a breakfast club and an after-school club, both privately run. They did not form part of the inspection.

- At the time of the inspection, the key stage 2 pupils, other than those in Year 3, were absent from school on a residential trip.
- There have been some recent changes in staffing and a restructuring of the senior leadership team.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector, accompanied by the headteacher, briefly visited several classes. Inspectors also observed a small number of lessons jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors heard younger pupils reading.
- The inspectors looked extensively at pupils' work from all classes.
- The lead inspector held meetings with several members of staff. He talked informally with several parents in the playground. He met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body. He also attended an assembly.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, the school's evaluation of its own performance, minutes of the governing body, the school's assessment data on pupils' current progress and information about safeguarding.
- Inspectors analysed 46 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

John Laver, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Mirams	Ofsted Inspector
Peta Dyke	Ofsted Inspector

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