

Church Cowley St James Church of England Primary School

Bartholomew Road, Cowley, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX4 3QH

Inspection dates

6–7 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders are effective. They have developed an ambitious culture for pupils and staff.
- Leaders monitor teaching and learning robustly. They have successfully reversed the dip in pupils' achievements in key stage 2 in 2016.
- Teaching is good because staff have secure subject knowledge. Pupils make good progress. Nevertheless, some pupils, especially the most able, are not challenged sufficiently in lessons.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make strong progress because support is planned carefully to meet their needs.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well because pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide specialist support.
- Pupils enjoy school and behave well. They work hard and take pride in their achievements.
- The school's safeguarding procedures are robust. This helps pupils feel safe at school.
- Children in the early years get off to a good start in their education. As a result of strong teaching, the children make rapid progress.
- The curriculum provides rich opportunities to learn well. This ensures that pupils develop their skills rapidly through accessing a wide range of subjects.
- The school's work to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Pupils have a good understanding of other cultures and religions.
- Governors are rigorous. They challenge leaders to provide convincing evidence of improvements.
- Teachers and teaching assistants do not routinely ask questions that challenge pupils' thinking, and learning slows as a result.
- The school's system for tracking attendance has led to improvements. Even so, attendance remains below the national average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers and teaching assistants use questioning more consistently to promote deeper learning
 - teachers plan learning that challenges all pupils, particularly the most able, at an appropriate level to achieve their potential.
- Improve attendance by:
 - evaluating more rigorously the strategies that have brought about improvements
 - analysing which pupils do not attend often enough, taking appropriate remedial measures.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has created an ambitious learning culture for pupils and staff. The leadership team has evaluated the school's strengths and weaknesses accurately and set aspirational priorities. Leaders have had a positive impact on achievement after a dip in the 2016 results. Leaders, including subject leaders, understand their roles and are tenacious in keeping a close check that their high expectations for teaching and pupils' learning are met.
- Leadership at all levels is robust. The headteacher and assistant headteachers work together effectively to lead this school in challenging circumstances. The proportion of pupils who transfer into the school during the academic year is high. Leaders work successfully to welcome and integrate new pupils. This means that pupils settle into the school quickly and achieve well from the moment they start. Leaders have managed significant changes in staffing effectively to maintain the good quality of teaching.
- Subject leaders provide strong support for their areas of responsibility. The guidance they provided for their colleagues contributed both to the improvements in the most recent national tests and to current pupils' improved achievement. Leaders of subjects analyse accurately the progress made by pupils, ensuring that teaching focuses precisely where achievement is less strong.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is effective. The leader ensures that pupils' needs are identified correctly and that early and appropriate interventions are put in place to accelerate pupils' progress. The additional funding is used carefully to ensure that staff are well trained to meet pupils' needs.
- Leaders and governors have high expectations of staff. Weaknesses in teaching are tackled quickly and firmly. The leadership team ensures that teachers are well supported through the system of 'coaching plans' to improve their practice. Professional development for staff is productive and remains central to improving the quality of teaching further and raising standards.
- Leaders have planned the curriculum thoroughly. They have ensured that pupils' learning in all subjects, including science, art and music, is good. Pupils are inspired by the different subjects available to them, which enrich their learning experiences, enhancing both their academic progress and personal development. One parent commented on their children's experience, saying, 'They all enjoy school and often come home telling me about new things they've learned in a variety of subjects from phonics to science to religious education.' The curriculum is developed further by a range of additional activities. For example, a rock-band session on the first day of the inspection clearly strengthened pupils' musical skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their awareness of British values are fostered well. Pupils' understanding of different world faiths is profound because they focus on key books and literature from a wide range of religions. Pupils experience democracy in action through elections to the school council. This process

also helps pupils to respect others whose opinions might be different to theirs.

- Leaders and governors make sure that the physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used well. Teachers are skilled in teaching PE, benefiting from observing specialists at work with pupils. The sports coaches' work with pupils is improving pupils' skills rapidly in a wide array of sports. Specialists also provide a broad range of activities before and after school that pupils enjoy. The continued success of the school's work is evident in the increased participation of pupils.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective.
- The governing body has a sharp focus on the school's priorities and on holding senior leaders to account. Governors require leaders to provide a wide range of telling evidence of the impact of their work to improve outcomes for pupils.
- Governors receive detailed reports from school leaders and undertake a range of well-planned visits to the school to gain first-hand views of its work. This means that they have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the areas where it can improve.
- Governors scrutinise the use of pupil premium funding thoroughly to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well. Governors keep a careful check on the spending of additional funding to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They know how interventions and additional resources match pupils' needs and impact on their achievement.
- Governors know about the quality of teaching and ensure that any pay awards for teaching staff are linked to the progress made by pupils.
- Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective, for example by checking the school's record of employment checks. They have a good knowledge and understanding of their statutory safeguarding responsibilities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that a strong culture of safeguarding permeates the school. Robust procedures are in place to ensure pupils' safety. The site is secure and well maintained. Safeguarding records are up to date and managed very carefully. Leaders responsible for safeguarding carry out their roles effectively. For example, risk assessments are completed thoroughly for a wide range of on- and off-site activities.
- Staff are committed to keeping pupils safe, as well as making sure that they receive the support they need. Leaders and staff identify and discuss any concerns about pupils immediately and seek additional help from other agencies when necessary.
- Staff receive comprehensive training and regular updates on different aspects related to safeguarding. As a result, staff are knowledgeable about a wide range of aspects of safeguarding, including the prevention of radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The school experienced a period of inconsistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment following the previous inspection. The headteacher and senior leaders took decisive action and this has led to sustained improvement in the quality of teaching across the school. It is consistently good, as are pupils' outcomes.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. Teachers plan pupils' learning well, building on what pupils know and can do. They ensure that pupils are given frequent and challenging opportunities to use their knowledge and skills across the different areas of the curriculum.
- Reading is taught well. The teaching of phonics is successful and younger pupils quickly learn to decode words. Pupils read age-appropriate books confidently. As pupils get older, they develop their understanding well because they are skilled at identifying information they find in texts.
- The school's teaching of writing is effective. Pupils plan their work well with high-quality support from staff. Pupils learn to write detailed first drafts with a focus on presenting their ideas clearly. Pupils edit their work accurately, concentrating on their spelling and punctuation, and make rapid improvements in their skills.
- Teachers plan well-structured mathematics lessons, with a strong emphasis on reasoning and problem-solving. Pupils consolidate and deepen their understanding as a result, and know the calculations that they need to use when tackling challenging mathematical problems. Teachers move pupils on quickly after checking their understanding, to ensure rapid progress.
- Subjects other than English and mathematics are also taught well. Teachers use a range of strategies and resources, including video clips and discussion, to ignite and sustain pupils' interest. For example, in a Year 1 art lesson, pupils studied paintings by Monet with great interest, before using his techniques very effectively in their own work.
- Teachers sometimes do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Where teaching is strong, lessons are well planned to match pupils' abilities and, consequently, pupils are stretched in their learning. There are still occasions when this is not the case, especially for the most able pupils, and pupils then do not progress as quickly as they should.
- Adults' questioning varies in quality. Some staff ask questions which help pupils to deepen their learning, challenging pupils to justify their thinking. However, the pace of learning slows when pupils only respond to simple questions, or when only the more assertive pupils are given the chance to contribute their views.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils say that they are well cared for and that staff listen to them. They know they can speak to any member of staff if they have any concerns. Staff help pupils to know how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet.
- Pupils are punctual to their lessons and are well prepared to begin their learning. They are confident, self-assured and eager to share their views. Most pupils show respect and listen attentively to each other.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying. They are aware that bullying is something that happens persistently and is different from merely falling out with your friends. Pupils said that there is little or no bullying in school and any misbehaviour is dealt with quickly.
- Parents and carers who met with inspectors, and a large number who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were positive about the way their children are cared for. They praise the school staff for being supportive and attentive. Parents say that their children really like coming to school. A comment written by one parent, typical of many, was 'My two children attend the school, they are always excited to go in.'
- Pupils enjoy the breakfast and after-school clubs where they can choose from a wide variety of activities, including table tennis and craftwork. Pupils also benefit from being able to eat a healthy breakfast and tea in a safe environment.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and at break and lunchtime. Pupils share equipment and willingly take turns with each other. At lunchtime, pupils line up in an orderly manner and eat their lunches sensibly and sociably.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. Teachers have high expectations for pupils to remain focused on their work. Pupils take pride in their work and there is clear evidence of improved presentation in their books.
- Pupils play cooperatively with each other. There are lots of different opportunities outside, including those for active play as well as quieter spaces for reflection. Pupils take responsibility for putting out and tidying up equipment.
- Pupils say that behaviour is usually good. Pupils respect the school rules and know there are consequences to bad behaviour. Some pupils find it difficult to control their own behaviour successfully. However, staff manage behaviour well and provide effective support to a small number of pupils who occasionally misbehave.
- Pupils' attendance is below the national average for primary schools but is improving. Leaders work closely with families and outside agencies to improve the attendance of all pupils. Leaders have developed an innovative range of rewards to encourage regular attendance. However, the school does not fully analyse which pupils have particularly infrequent attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes for pupils across the school are positive. This is because teaching is good. As a result, most pupils attain well, make rapid progress and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils are making stronger progress in reading, mathematics and writing than previously. The school's assessment information and pupils' work show that the progress of current pupils is also consistently good across other subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. Their achievement is very closely tracked by senior leaders. Leaders have a precise understanding of how well individual disadvantaged pupils are doing. Consequently, if any disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, are at risk of not achieving as well as they could, appropriate support is put in place immediately.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities achieve well from their starting points because of bespoke support and carefully planned interventions. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored to ensure that they achieve well in their academic and personal skills.
- The most able pupils make good progress across the curriculum because they are generally challenged to use the full range of their skills. However, on occasion, teachers set insufficiently challenging tasks. As a result, some of the most able pupils do not make the more rapid progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils acquire secure phonics skills in the early years and key stage 1 because the teaching is systematic and thorough. Teachers then build on this in key stage 2, where pupils begin to develop the skills to analyse texts in a more advanced way. Pupils, including those from low starting points, use a wide range of strategies effectively to read confidently and accurately.
- Previously, by the end of key stage 1, girls attained higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics than boys. However, leaders' efforts to promote boys' progress and attainment are proving successful. Consequently, boys' current achievement is good.
- Pupils in key stage 2 have a wide range of opportunities to explore and learn across the curriculum. They make consistently strong progress. Current key stage 2 pupils are making better progress in all subjects than in previous years because teaching has improved due to effective professional development.

Early years provision

Good

- From starting points that are typically low for their age, children make rapid progress in the early years. By the end of the early years, children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Phonics is taught well in the Nursery and Reception classes. Children learn the basic skills of reading quickly and apply the sounds they have learned to their writing.
- Children enter the early years happy, motivated and ready to learn. They have good relationships with adults, as well as with each other. Children's attitudes are positive in the classroom and in the outside area. They show a high degree of confidence and sustain their interest and focus well.
- Children's behaviour is good. They learn and play collaboratively and sensitively. Adults

encourage children to be as independent as possible, choosing the resources they would like to use in their play and tidying up after themselves.

- Teachers plan exciting activities that enthuse children. The bright environment, inside and out, provides challenging opportunities for children to write, read and practise using their number skills. For example, children made good progress in mathematics, adding and subtracting money when selling items in the 'shop'.
- Disadvantaged children make good progress in all areas of learning because the early years pupil premium funding is used well. Detailed plans support disadvantaged children well in the specific areas of learning in which they need additional support.
- Staff know how well children are learning and what they need to plan next. This is because assessment systems are effective. Adults are vigilant in identifying any children who might need extra help, and use the expertise of the SENCo to address their needs successfully.
- The setting is very well led and managed. The leader employs innovative ideas to adapt teaching and learning activities effectively to meet the needs of individual children. Leaders ensure that children are safe and welfare requirements are met.
- Staff know children and their parents well because they visit children's pre-school settings and meet individually with parents. Children's achievements, both academic and personal, are recorded accurately in an electronic journal that parents use to understand how well their children are doing. One parent commented: 'The early years teaching team is very supportive and caring for our child, and makes sure he has every opportunity to learn and progress. I really get the sense that they're looking out for him as a whole person.'

School details

Unique reference number	123139
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10037799

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

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	461
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Esnouf
Headteacher	Stephen Dew
Telephone number	01865 778 484
Website	www.churchcowley.org
Email address	office.3210@church-cowley-st-james.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 March 2013

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Nearly all teachers have joined the school since the last inspection.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is higher than that found nationally.
- A higher-than-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils joining the school at times other than the normal point in the school year is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum

expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 19 lessons, accompanied by the headteacher and assistant headteachers. An inspector also attended an assembly.
- The inspectors carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work.
- The inspectors held meetings with governors, a representative of the local authority and school staff, including the headteacher and subject leaders.
- The inspectors looked at documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, information on pupils' attainment and progress, records of behaviour, safety, attendance and punctuality, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding documents.
- Discussions were held with groups of teachers, pupils and support staff members. The inspectors listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors took account of the views of 50 parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke with parents informally at the school gates. The inspectors also considered 34 questionnaires completed by the staff.

Inspection team

Richard Blackmore, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sara Benn	Ofsted Inspector
Nigel Cook	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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