

Curry Rivel Church of England VC Primary School

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

Inspection dates

3–4 July 2019

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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The acting headteacher is rebuilding the school month on month. She is leading with determination and bringing about the much-needed improvements successfully. Many parents and carers recognise these changes as positive. However, leaders' work is recent and not yet sustained over time.
- Leaders' actions to strengthen safeguarding systems, improve safeguarding record-keeping, and train staff are effective. As a result, the culture of safeguarding in the school is secure.
- The leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is not yet fully effective. Leaders identify pupils' needs accurately. However, they do not check teaching sufficiently well. As a result, some pupils make insufficient progress over time.
- Governors' actions are beginning to have impact. However, they have not evaluated the impact of pupil premium funding effectively.
- The roles and responsibilities of middle leaders are developing. However, leaders' checks and their impact on raising standards are too variable. More time is needed to embed middle leaders' work and ensure a greater impact on pupils' progress.
- Although improving, teaching has been too inconsistent year on year. Some pupils have not made consistently good progress over time in reading, writing and mathematics. Too few disadvantaged pupils have skills and knowledge in line with their age.
- Pupils who have underachieved in the past are beginning to catch up. However, teachers do not use their assessments to modify their teaching so that it is matched closely to pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils' misconceptions are not dealt with as they occur.
- Teaching does not challenge the most able pupils sufficiently well.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have an incisive understanding of the school's strengths and remaining weaknesses.
- Pupils' achievements at the end of key stages 1 and 2 have improved markedly this year.
- Teachers' assessments, including in Reception, are accurate.
- Pupils' behaviour and conduct is good. Pupils enjoy school and attend well.
- Staff training is bringing about consistency to whole-school systems and processes.
- Teaching in Nursery is strong. Adults work well to deepen children's understanding.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - securing substantive leadership for the school
 - further developing the impact of middle leadership so that it brings about pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics that is consistently good
 - ensuring that any pupils who have previously underachieved catch up and attain well
 - ensuring that the leadership of SEND is strong and effective so that pupils with SEND make consistently good progress in their academic and personal, social and emotional development
 - governors holding leaders to account stringently for the impact of the pupil premium funding
 - governors' actions securing and sustaining rapid improvement so that teaching and pupils' achievement are at least good overall.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers use their assessments to adapt their teaching so that it matches pupils' needs well and pupils' misconceptions are dealt with as they occur
 - teaching enables disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND to catch up and achieve well
 - teaching routinely challenges pupils, including the most able, so that they make better progress and raise their achievement.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The acting headteacher is taking rapid action to bring about considered improvement in the school. She is building new school-wide systems so that teachers and leaders, including governors, are working to the same goals. Since her arrival, she has united the staff team and governors in their work. Pupils and their parents recognise the improvements in their school.
- The acting headteacher is astute in her understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She is working systematically to bring about the much-needed changes. She is not cutting corners in her work. She is making sure that each stage of school improvement is secure. This is effective, but it is taking time to address the school's widespread weaknesses. Some important work, to improve the safeguarding of pupils, has slowed other aspects of school improvement. The complexity of these tasks means that leaders are only partway through the school's improvement journey.
- The acting headteacher is developing the skills of other leaders in the school. However, other priorities mean her time to do this has been short. Much good work has already started to train, coach and support middle leaders in their roles. For example, English and mathematics leaders have a strong understanding of their responsibilities and they are beginning to monitor the teaching of their subject. However, this work is recent; more time is needed before middle leaders' impact, beyond their own classroom, can be determined in full.
- Similarly, the leadership of SEND is underdeveloped. Since her arrival, the leader of SEND (SENCo) has set up new systems to identify pupils' needs. Leaders' current systems check that additional interventions happen but do not check their impact on pupils' learning sufficiently well. Leaders' actions do not ensure that the current teaching these pupils receive is tackling pupils' gaps in knowledge successfully.
- Leaders' actions to upgrade the school's curriculum so that it meets the requirements of the national curriculum are ongoing. The sequencing of subjects and knowledge that are taught have been overhauled in recent months. This is not yet ensuring that pupils have a full understanding of science and the foundation subjects, including the arts, because the school's increased expectations for improving the curriculum have only recently been introduced.
- The leadership of the sport premium is increasingly effective. Leaders' actions have resulted in a more tailored approach to monitor the impact of the funding this year. Consequently, attendance at clubs and activities and participation in sporting activities and local events have increased.
- In the past, leaders and governors have not evaluated the impact of the pupil premium sufficiently. The acting headteacher tracks the school's use of the pupil premium precisely. She has instigated a clear system for governors to evaluate the impact of this spending. However, leaders and governors are only just entering into the first stage of its evaluation. Over time, teaching for these pupils has been too variable. Too few of these pupils have the skills and knowledge expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Leaders' actions to improve staff subject knowledge are paying off. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are increasing. Staff training is proving successful in improving the impact and consistency of teaching. As a result, there is a greater parity of teaching across mixed-age classes.
- The curriculum on offer fosters pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education well. Leaders ensure that all pupils are included well. There is a strong family feel and sense of belonging.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to lead and take part in 'big issues'. The school council members show determination in their roles and see things through to completion, for example changes to playtime equipment and lunchtime meals. The current work of the 'eco team' has raised awareness of environmental issues across the school.
- Most parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school. Many parents reported on the increased communication they receive this year. However, a minority of parents raised concerns over the turbulence in school leadership across the past year and the effectiveness of the provision for pupils with SEND.

Governance of the school

- The governing body did not stall the decline in the school's performance quickly enough, neither did it ensure that swift action was taken after the last inspection. As a result, current leaders are only partway through the school's improvement journey to become at least good. Governors know that appointing a substantive headteacher is fundamental to providing the school with stability. The recruitment process is just beginning.
- Governors have welcomed the recent support provided by the local authority. They have overhauled their working practices. They have been proactive in commissioning surveys to gain an insight into staff and parental views. Governors have listened, and they are working productively to bring about change. They are beginning to hold current leaders to account for the actions they take by checking the impact of the school's work first-hand.
- Current governors have key roles and responsibilities; they take these seriously and meet with leaders in school to check for impact. Some of this work is very recent. Therefore, it is too early to see discernible impact. Nevertheless, the emerging work of the governing body shows capacity to continue further improvements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The culture of safeguarding has been overhauled in recent months. Every aspect of safeguarding in the school has undergone thorough auditing and improvement. The combined efforts of school leaders, the local authority and governors have ensured that safeguarding systems in the school are fit for purpose.
- Staff vetting checks are in line with current legislation and the school's single central record is meticulously kept.

- Staff training is up to date. Staff apply their training diligently. They raise concerns appropriately and in line with the school's policies should they be concerned that a pupil is at risk of harm. Safeguarding records are detailed and well organised. Leaders of safeguarding make timely referrals and escalate concerns when they are not satisfied with any action taken.
- Pupils feel safe and are safe at school. They have a strong understanding of how to keep safe in and out of school, including when using social media.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching over time has been too inconsistent across some year groups. Current teaching is beginning to remedy these weaknesses. However, disadvantaged pupils, the most able pupils, and pupils with SEND do not make consistently good progress from their different starting points. As a result, the impact of teaching is too variable to be good overall.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are rising as a result of leaders' challenge and support. Leaders' actions have ensured that there is a clear progression in teaching and learning in English and mathematics. This is enabling better coverage of the national curriculum. As a result, current teaching is enabling a greater proportion of pupils to gain the skills and knowledge expected for their age.
- Teaching for the most able pupils is not yet challenging enough. Sometimes, work on offer is too easy. When this happens, pupils have to work through concepts that they have already mastered. Consequently, too few of these pupils exceed the standards that are expected for their age.
- Teachers' assessments are accurate. However, while the impact of teaching is improving month on month, some pupils' underachievement remains because teachers do not use their assessments precisely enough to identify when they can move pupils on in their learning. Similarly, when misconceptions occur in lessons, teachers do not routinely modify their teaching to firmly address these misconceptions when they occur. This slows pupils' progress over time.
- Teaching assistants are effective in supporting pupils in their learning. They provide caring and nurturing support. Increasingly, this enables pupils to master new concepts and develop their confidence.
- The teaching of phonics enables most pupils to use and apply their knowledge of phonics to read and spell words accurately. The impact of the teaching of phonics is enabling pupils who have previously struggled to read to catch up. Pupils with previously low attainment now read Year 1 sounds and words accurately. However, some of these pupils do not yet read with the fluency and understanding expected for their age.
- The quality of teaching is improving steadily in reading, writing and mathematics across all year groups. However, this is very recent, so pupils' progress is not yet rapid enough or sustained.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are safe and feel safe. They articulate clearly what to do if they have any concerns and say that adults sort out any disagreements or issues quickly. Pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep safe online. Pupils say that bullying is rare.
- Pupils show respect for others' views and ideas. Pupils relish the opportunities they receive to be young leaders, and also to make a difference to whole-school policy. For example, pupils feel included in important decisions, such as upgrading the school's behaviour policy. Pupils say that adults' management of pupils' behaviour, when it falls short of the behaviour code, is more consistent as a result.
- Most pupils are confident and self-assured. They present their work well and edit and improve their learning independently and with increasing confidence this term.
- Planned opportunities for developing pupils' personal and emotional development are strong. Pupils enjoy learning inside and outside and are exceptionally positive about the practical aspect of learning that 'forest school' brings.
- Supervision at lunchtimes and breaktimes is good. Pupils benefit from a range of activities, including the increased opportunities for sport and practical games this year.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. Pupils are polite and demonstrate good manners, including in assembly time.
- Leaders have put more stringent systems in place to monitor pupils' attendance this year. Over time, pupils' attendance has been above that seen nationally. This year, pupils' attendance has dipped to be broadly in line with the national average.
- A small minority of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND do not attend regularly enough. Reasons for absence are documented well. However, leaders identify that increasing pupils' attendance is fundamental in ensuring that these pupils maximise their opportunities to make consistently strong progress over time.
- Rates of pupil exclusions are low.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- There are incremental improvements to pupils' achievements across the school. However, pupils' achievements, from class to class, have been too inconsistent or fragile over time to be good overall.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 has been well below that seen nationally, across a three-year period. Pupils' attainment in mathematics has also been well below that seen nationally. A minority of pupils entered their new classes this year with significant gaps in their mathematical knowledge and ability to reason and

problem solve in mathematics. Current Year 6 pupils are being better prepared for secondary school because teaching is providing them with a fuller understanding of every aspect of the mathematics curriculum. Pupils' workbooks confirm that pupils' achievements are increasing noticeably this year.

- In the past, there has been a marked difference between the proportions of pupils meeting the expected standards in the spelling, punctuation and grammar assessments and in the pupils' writing assessments at the end of key stage 2. This difference is much larger than that seen nationally. Current teaching is enabling pupils to use and apply their knowledge and understanding of sentence structure more effectively this year. As a result, many more pupils now write with the complexity and accuracy expected for their age.
- Pupils who entered key stage 2 with knowledge and skills lower than those expected for their age are beginning to catch up as a result of better teaching this year. However, the most able pupils are not challenged in their learning consistently well. As a result, these pupils do not achieve well enough, given their capabilities.
- Across the school, too few disadvantaged pupils have the skills and knowledge expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils with SEND do not make sufficient progress over time.
- The proportions of pupils who reach the expected standards in the phonics screening checks have been in line or above with the national averages for the past four years. Those pupils who have previously struggled to read are catching up as a result of the additional teaching and intervention they receive. However, a minority of pupils with previously low attainment do not read with the fluency and speed that is expected for their age.
- The dips seen in pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 in 2018 have been reversed this year. The proportion of pupils with the skills and knowledge expected for their age has risen markedly in Year 2.
- Pupils' achievements in science at the end of key stages 1 and 2 are lower than in other schools nationally. While current pupils are gaining a much-improved and better breadth of knowledge in science, the depth of knowledge they have is too variable from class to class because of the inconsistent coverage in this subject over time.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of teaching in the Nursery is strong. Carefully thought-out provision supports the younger and older children's learning well. From the time they start in the Nursery, there is a strong emphasis on gaining a love of stories and rhymes. As children progress towards their formal schooling, they also experience teaching that extends their early language comprehension of known and loved stories.
- Children make strong progress in Nursery because of the good-quality teaching and support they receive. Adult interactions are strong and move children's learning on well. Leaders' track children's progress precisely, including those who are eligible for two-year-old funding.
- Children in Nursery and Reception build strong relationships with adults and their peers because of the good routines that are built. Parents recognise this and are very positive

about the start to school their children receive.

- Pupils in Reception are prepared well for Year 1. Teaching enables them to become confident learners, take turns, and build relationships with each other effectively.
- The proportion of children who reach a 'good level of development', the standard that is expected by the end of the Reception year, has been broadly in line with that seen nationally over time. Children make good progress from their different starting points.
- Children benefit from wide-ranging activities over time to develop their early language and communication skills, and early reading, writing and number work. In addition, children benefit from a broad curriculum offer. Children's physical development is prioritised. Children are motivated and interested in their learning.
- The strategic leadership of the early years is good overall. Over the past year, the way pupils' progress is tracked and analysed has been refined. Current procedures enable school leaders to gain a better overview of children's progress over time from Nursery through to the end of Reception.
- Safeguarding and welfare requirements are met well.

School details

Unique reference number	123752
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10088303

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Lynne Benton
Headteacher (Acting)	Mrs Frances Burns
Telephone number	01458 251404
Website	www.curryrivelpriamary.somerset.org.uk
Email address	curryrivelpriamary@educ.somerset.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	07 March 2017

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the school has extended its age range to include a Nursery for two- and three-year-olds. The Nest, an early years provider, operates on the school site for children aged 12 weeks to 2 years. The Nest was not part of this inspection and is inspected under the 'Early years inspection framework'.
- There have been considerable staff changes since the school's last inspection. The substantive headteacher was absent from April 2018 and resigned from duty on 31 May 2019.
- There is an acting headteacher who works three days per week. She has been in post since May 2018. The senior teacher acts as operational leader of the school when the acting headteacher is absent.
- The senior teacher, who is the leader of SEND, has recently taken on wider responsibilities for the leadership of the pupil premium funding and safeguarding in the school.

- There have been changes to the governing body since the previous inspection, including a new chair of governors since April 2018.
- The local authority has provided the school with support since April 2018. This has included brokering interim leadership for the school, supporting governance, and improving teaching, learning and assessment.
- The English and mathematics leaders were new to post in September 2018. The leader of SEND took up post in September 2017.
- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is just below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for SEND support is broadly in line with that seen nationally.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in visits to lessons across the school, including in the Nursery. Most lesson visits were conducted alongside senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff, including the leaders of the pupil premium, SEND, the early years, English and mathematics. Inspectors reviewed pupils' work across a range of subjects. The inspection team worked in close partnership with the acting headteacher and senior leader to review pupils' progress and provision over time.
- Inspectors talked with two groups of pupils to seek their views about the school. Inspectors listened to pupils from Years 1, 2, and 3 reading. The pupil survey was issued to the school. An inspector reviewed the findings. However, there were no pupil responses.
- Inspectors held meetings with two representatives of the governing body. An inspector held a telephone discussion with the senior inspector for primary education from Somerset local authority. She also met with the school's education partner.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of school documents, including the school's improvement plan, and the school's view of its own performance. Inspectors also looked at pupils' performance information, and documents relating to school governance. Inspectors reviewed records relating to behaviour, leaders' monitoring checks, pupils' attendance information, and a range of documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at social times and around the school.
- Inspectors considered the 66 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and the free-text comments. An inspector also talked with parents during the inspection to seek their views of the school and of the education their children receive. Inspectors also took into account the school's internal survey findings and the staff online survey.

Inspection team

Julie Carrington, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Malcolm Willis

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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