

High Littleton C of E VC Primary School

Church Hill, High Littleton, Bristol, BS39 6HF

Inspection dates 23–24 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics during their time at school, and their achievement has been high for the last four years. Achievement and attainment are exceptional in reading.
- From generally average starting points, many pupils make at least good progress and reach above-average standards or better.
- Every group of pupils, including the disabled and those with special educational needs, achieve equally well.
- Almost all more-able pupils reach their full potential, although few are yet reaching exceptional levels of attainment.
- Teaching has been outstanding for several years. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and make learning interesting and exciting. They always set work that is challenging while never being too easy or too difficult.
- Pupils' behaviour, enthusiastic attitudes to learning and care and respect for each other are outstanding. Together with adults, they make the school a safe and happy environment for all.
- The headteacher is a caring and outstanding leader. He is supported very strongly by an excellent deputy headteacher, other leaders and a highly motivated staff.
- There is outstanding support and challenge from the governing body, which has many skills to offer and is exceptionally well led.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons taught by six teachers. Three of these lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, members of the management team and six governors. A telephone discussion took place with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work. He examined the school's improvement plans and self-evaluation, monitoring records on how well it is doing, safeguarding arrangements, health and safety records, school policies and a range of pupils' work and information about their progress.
- The inspector took account of the 30 responses to the online Parent View survey, one letter from a parent, and responses from parents and carers to the school's own recent surveys of their views. He also held informal discussions with a few parents and carers.
- The inspector examined the 17 questionnaires from staff.

Inspection team

Rodney Braithwaite, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- High Littleton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are White British. A very small number of pupils come from other ethnic heritages.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is slightly below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil-premium funding is below average. This is additional government funding for particular groups, including children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families. There are currently no children of service families in the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school has a Reception class and four mixed-age classes.
- The school belongs to a local group of four primary schools which share resources, and hold training days together. The school also belongs to the special educational needs network in Norton Radstock, a group of schools which use specialist support and advisory staff for supporting disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- The school has links with the Saltford Teaching School in Bath and the Partnership Teaching School in Radstock, in order to support the professional development of staff.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that it develops further a progressively more challenging range of learning opportunities, especially for the highest-attaining pupils, in order that as many as possible reach exceptional levels of attainment and achievement in the future.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children begin their education in Reception with skills similar to those expected for their age, although there are variations year-on-year owing to the small sizes of the cohorts. They make outstanding progress from the time they start school until they leave at the end of Year 6.
- By the time they leave, their standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average. Attainment has been very consistent for the last five years, although it has risen even higher in the last two years. In 2012 and 2013, all pupils reached levels expected for their age, and many achieved even better.
- The school is one of the highest-performing primary schools in the authority, and compares very favourably with all other schools nationally. This shows especially in the progress of pupils, where the proportion making good or better progress is much higher than average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Achievement is outstanding for all groups of pupils. This includes the very small number of pupils from minority ethnic heritages.
- The small number of pupils supported by the pupil premium reach levels of attainment higher in English and mathematics than similar pupils nationally and equal to those of other pupils in the school. There is a small gap in their attainment at higher levels compared with other pupils in the school, but this is closing rapidly.
- More-able pupils reach the high levels of which they are capable. Few have yet reached exceptionally high levels, although the school is introducing new strategies in order to raise attainment for some to these higher levels. The work seen during the inspection shows that all pupils are continuing to make excellent progress, and that a few are on track to reach the highest levels.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is also outstanding because the school takes great care in identifying and providing for their specific learning needs.
- Pupils' progress in the learning of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) has improved in the last two years. The inspection provided very clear evidence that for younger pupils and pupils who find learning difficult, their learning and enjoyment of phonics is rapidly raising their reading and writing skills.
- Pupils are avid readers and many enjoy selecting their own books. They name a wide variety of favourite books and authors, and express well-thought-out views of the quality of the writing. Younger pupils have many opportunities to read to adults, and their well-kept reading diaries are a helpful guide to their progress.
- Pupils achieve well across a number of other subjects such as music, physical education and history, and are given many opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The consistently good and frequently outstanding teaching throughout the school is based firmly upon teachers' high expectations of pupils, and their detailed knowledge of pupils' individual abilities which they use in planning to help them learn as well as possible.
- This has been the situation for several years, and has enabled pupils to maintain very high levels of progress and attainment in their learning.
- Lessons are often exciting and stimulating, building upon pupils' previous learning and stirring their imagination. This encourages the very positive attitudes of pupils to their learning.
- This was observed in a lesson in the Year 4/5 class when pupils prepared a report about life in the locality during the Second World War based upon a talk from a resident at the time. There

was much evidence of excellent development of literacy skills, historical knowledge ('Chamberlain was sacked, and Churchill elected leader'), and spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

- In Reception, planning concentrates particularly on the personal and social development of children. As a result, teachers and teaching assistants successfully enable all children to make excellent progress, shown by the very detailed and informative records of progress of each child in their 'Learning Journey' books.
- Teachers show great consistency across the school in giving opportunities for pupils to discuss their methods and ideas, so that they frequently inform other members of their class what and how they have learned. This was observed when a small group of more-able pupils from Years 5 and 6 were being challenged to solve problems in mathematics in a lesson with the headteacher. Every pupil had the self-confidence to explain to the class how they reached their conclusions.
- Relationships throughout the school are excellent, and teachers ensure that pupils are never struggling to understand how to improve their work. A typical comment from a parent is, 'The school has excellent staff who genuinely care for the children they teach.'
- Teachers have worked diligently in the last year to improve their marking, especially in their guidance to pupils on how to improve. This has been successful, although the school leadership is still pushing hard for further improvement.
- A feature of the teaching is the excellent use of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the whole range of subjects taught in the school. This is apparent in their encouragement of skills in speaking and listening, which is helping pupils to be very well prepared for their future education.
- Teachers work very effectively with their teaching assistants, who make valuable contributions to the learning and welfare of pupils throughout the school.
- Although teachers in the school are highly skilled in the teaching of many subjects, leaders are always prepared to bring in specialist teachers from other sources to support them, such as a French teacher from the local high school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school, their learning, adults and each other. They name a wide range of activities which they have enjoyed in school, including 'making three different chocolate boxes into patterns', 'planning what we are going to do' and 'The Big Write'.
- Pupils show great determination in trying to improve their work, and have detailed knowledge of their learning targets and how they can improve. Older pupils, especially, enjoy their opportunities to comment and evaluate each other's work and are generous in their written praise, but also prepared to offer advice.
- Behaviour in lessons is nearly always outstanding because pupils are well challenged in their work: 'It can be hard or just right, and some is more challenging than we expected.' Pupils are happy to work on their own but also work effectively in pairs or small groups. Very occasionally, a small number of pupils can become over exuberant in their learning, mostly through sheer enjoyment.
- Their absorption in learning was very apparent in a lesson in Year 5/6, where the teacher used an imaginative video very skilfully to heighten tension and pupils produced a cascade of verbal and written responses in a fervent learning atmosphere.
- This is a very caring school. Pupils respect adults and say they are very well cared for by them. Equally, pupils care for each other in a happy family atmosphere.
- Older pupils are often seen looking after their very young 'buddies' outside, even one who happily stood next to his mentor who was keeping goal at the time. Several pupils from Year 6 regularly and enthusiastically look after children from Reception during Friday lunchtimes, devising games and some learning for them without adult input.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils are well aware of the

need to behave safely in an old rambling building, and on a very widely spread playground area with many items of apparatus.

- Children in the Reception class soon settle in to their routines and rapidly learn what is expected of them. They enjoy their many activities outside but are careful when involved with practical activities which can be very exciting.
- The need to use the internet and mobile phones safely is well understood. Pupils understand about the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. They indicated that they have no problems with bullying, and none were able to recall any incidents of this kind.
- A very small number of parents expressed concerns through Parent View about bullying. The inspector followed this up, but was unable to find any evidence of this in school files or any letters of complaint, or in the regular parent responses to school questionnaires.
- Attendance is excellent, and consistently well above average. Pupils are punctual to lessons and in arriving at school. There have been no exclusions of pupils for a number of years.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The very caring and aspirational headteacher, together with a highly capable deputy headteacher, lead a strongly motivated team of managers and staff who share the same high ambitions for the education and personal development of pupils.
- The leadership of the senior managers is exceptional, in particular as excellent teaching role models. Pupils talk with considerable enthusiasm about their learning in regular lessons with both leaders.
- Although the school has a record of several years of very high achievement, and senior leaders ensure that teaching is of high quality, they are never satisfied or rest on their laurels. They are involved in a relentless search for even better performance, and the staff share this constant priority that pupils must reach their full potential.
- The headteacher is at the forefront of checking and improving teaching where necessary. He regularly observes teaching, and while giving much positive feedback, he will always offer suggestions to help teachers be even more effective.
- Teachers' targets for the performance of their pupils are closely related to the school's priorities for development. Teachers are becoming very skilled as a result in evaluating their own teaching accurately.
- Leaders enhance the development of teaching even further by giving many opportunities for high quality training to develop skills through the school's several productive partnerships with other school groups.
- Leaders know the school very well and evaluate its and their performance in fine detail, judging performance accurately, although occasionally rather cautiously.
- The highly effective leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are notable for creating excellent links with the pre-school Nursery close to the school. Parents are also encouraged to be involved as much as possible in their children's education, and many comment delightedly on this in their questionnaire responses. Transition to Year 1 is seamless, as children mix constantly with pupils throughout the school.
- Thoughtful use of the pupil premium funding has resulted in exemplary progress for these pupils through improved resources and teaching planned exclusively for their own particular needs. The school has already allocated the new sports funding to improving facilities indoors, and is very confident that when completed they will give better quality opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and fitness.
- The school provides a fine range of learning opportunities in and out of school, although it is still preparing for the introduction of the new national curriculum next September. The excellent behaviour of pupils and strong local links have greatly assisted their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is totally inclusive and promotes equal opportunities at all times. There is no evidence

of discrimination through gender, ethnicity, disability or special educational needs.

- The local authority has an especially high regard for the school and its leadership. It is always happy to support the school on request.
- The very great majority of parents express great appreciation of what the school provides for their children and their learning. A typical comment is, 'I am incredibly pleased with my children's progress and overall school experience.'
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is exceptionally well informed and ambitious and very challenging to leaders. It is also very well led by a determined and experienced Chair. Governors are continually in school, and a number have been involved regularly in observing teaching in order to help their judgements regarding performance management. Governors already have in place a new pay policy for staff, closely relating teachers' pay to their targets for pupils' performance. Governors oversee the use of the pupil premium funding rigorously, and ensure that funding is always used to support pupils' progress. Governors have good skills in their evaluation of the school and their own performance, in managing a tight school budget, and in analysing value for money. They also have high ambitions for the future of the school. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and that school policies are reviewed regularly.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	109196
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	431461

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	135
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sharon Wiseman
Headteacher	Gareth Griffith
Date of previous school inspection	4–5 February 2009
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