

# Bowlsh Infant School

Bowlsh, Shepton Mallet, BA4 5JQ

**Inspection dates** 7–8 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The school has improved since its last inspection, and pupils from all backgrounds now achieve well thanks to good teaching.
- Good leadership is helping to make sure that pupils make consistently good progress in every year group.
- Teachers make lessons interesting and almost always plan work that is at the right level for the different pupils.
- Additional adults give good extra help and guidance to pupils who need it.
- Parents are very happy with the school.
- Some teaching is outstanding. At its best it engages pupils' attention completely, for example through learning games or lively songs and actions, and pupils learn new things very rapidly.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are friendly to each other, and rightly feel safe and secure.
- The new headteacher has made an excellent start. She has won the confidence of staff, governors, pupils and parents and established a good team with a shared view of how the school can improve further.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, work in part of the lesson is too hard or too easy for some pupils, and so learning slows.
- Sometimes marking is too complicated and then it does not help the pupils to improve their work.
- The school does not check precisely enough on how well it is using some small amounts of its money. It gets extra money for pupils who may need more help; at the moment it cannot be sure exactly how well the things it does with the money are working.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited seven lessons, and saw all of the teachers with classes. Six of these visits were made with the headteacher. The inspector saw the teaching of phonics (the links between letters and the sounds they make) in every class.
- The inspector had discussions with the headteacher, teachers and governors, and a representative from the local authority. She looked at questionnaires completed by 22 staff. She also talked to groups of pupils, and heard some of them reading.
- The views of the six parents who responded to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account, and the inspector also spoke to parents, grandparents and carers as they collected children after school.
- She looked carefully at various documents including the leaders' own views of the school's strengths and weaknesses, records of pupils' attainment and progress, and information relating to safeguarding. She read the previous inspection report and the letter following the monitoring visit made by an Ofsted inspector in March 2011.

## Inspection team

Deborah Zachary, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most primary schools, and has only four classes.
- Almost all of the pupils are White British.
- A small number of pupils need extra help, mostly because of speech, language and communication difficulties. The proportions supported at school action level, and at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs, are broadly average.
- The proportion supported by the pupil premium, which is extra government funding given for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority or from service families, is below average.
- The school does not send any of its pupils to be taught elsewhere.
- Since the last inspection, there have been two changes of headteacher. The current headteacher joined in September 2012.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that pupils of all abilities have work that is at just the right level of difficulty throughout each lesson.
- Simplify marking, so pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve their work.
- Check exactly what effect extra help given to pupils is having, particularly those supported by the pupil premium, so that it can be altered quickly if necessary to give the best results.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The school's records show that when children enter the Reception Year, their skills and understanding are generally below the levels expected nationally for their age. By the time they leave at the end of Year 2 they have largely caught up and standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- One key reason why pupils catch up is that those who need particular help have their needs carefully assessed. These pupils then have specially designed daily programmes, and additional support in class, that help them with physical and emotional or social needs. This means that they are fully involved in everything that goes on, and make as good progress as everyone else.
- Pupils who could have other disadvantages, for example those known to be eligible for the pupil premium, are also closing the gap on what other pupils achieve nationally. The good progress they are making shows how well the school is promoting equal opportunities and tackling barriers to learning.
- Pupils usually learn quickly in lessons, and sometimes very rapidly. For example, in an excellent lesson, pupils in Years 1 and 2 mastered the idea that the letter 'e' at the end of a word makes the vowel in the middle sound its name. They learnt in a very active way, making signs for letters and singing with the teacher, and by the end of the lesson many wrote sentences that included their own words of this type.
- Learning is not outstanding because occasionally the more-able and/or the less-able pupils waste a little time. This happens when they do the same work as everyone else, and it is too hard for some and too easy for others.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers are good at making sure work is interesting. For example, some pupils in Years 1 and 2 practised phonics by making up firework noises. They chose the right combination of letters to give the sound, sticking the words on their paintings of fireworks and reading them with excitement.
- Teachers use made-up words well to teach phonics, but they are careful not to confuse the pupils. In a lesson in Year 2, pupils grouped words into different spellings of the same sound, but had a symbol of a monster who 'ate' all the words that were not real. This meant that they had to think hard, not only about the sounds but also what the words meant.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good overall, and sometimes outstanding. In a particularly good numeracy session the teacher played a game with pupils, making them guess which number had been removed from a sequence displayed like dominoes. She skilfully changed the range of numbers to make it harder or easier and, when needed, introduced the idea of making a bigger number by adding. The children were delighted with the game and learnt very rapidly.
- In the same session, children chose from different activities. These covered a good range of things, some suggested the day before by the children themselves and some put out by the teacher to prompt discussions about numbers. Teaching assistants worked well with small groups and individuals, prompting and questioning, and making sure the children were learning well. This was typical of the good help they provide in lessons for all age groups.
- When teachers introduce each lesson, they tell pupils what they are trying to learn and what they themselves will be looking for. This helps the pupils to try hard. The group work that follows is often planned well. In Year 1, pupils did word jigsaws and a dice game with teaching assistants. They all learned quickly because the words were changed to be exactly at the right level of difficulty for each group.
- Occasionally teachers do not make sure that the work stays exactly right throughout the lesson. The fine-tuning went wrong during the inspection when a teacher realised that pupils were

already good at something, but did not adapt their plans quickly enough. It also went wrong when children were being introduced to a phonic sound in a very large group and a few did not have the physical skill to write the letter on their small whiteboards. The school has already decided to split the large group up.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils say that they feel safe and the school is a friendly place. They do a lot of things to help each other and the adults, including helping at playtimes and through the school council. They use a 'friendship stop' in the playground where children go if they have nobody to play with, and they say no one waits for long. They know what bullying is but say it is not a problem in their school.
- Parents too are very happy. All who responded to the on-line questionnaire or spoke to the inspector would recommend the school to others. All who gave their views through questionnaires think their children are safe and looked after well.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, and arrive ready and eager to learn. Most show good social skills. Those who find it difficult to live up to the school's high standards of behaviour respond well to good guidance, so lessons are very rarely interrupted.
- Pupils are learning to think and reflect. In a moving assembly they sat quietly listening to Remembrance Day music while five pupils brought up wreaths and big poppies on which they had written particular 'thank you' messages. They are curious about the world around them. Year 2 pupils, for instance, thoroughly enjoyed talking about how butterflies are examples of symmetry in nature.
- Pupils are interested in what teachers write in their books. They recognise symbols such as ticks and smiley faces, and the symbols for 'two stars and a wish' that some teachers use to show two good things and something to improve. However, they are often confused in practice, because few can read what the teacher writes and some think the wish means something that is good. As a result, marking, which could provide a useful way to speed up progress, is not having maximum impact.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The school has made marked improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement since the last inspection. This has been the result of good work by both the previous headteacher and by the current headteacher and other managers.
- Despite the improvements, until this term the headteacher, staff and governors did not have a shared vision of the way they wanted the school to develop. The new headteacher has been outstandingly successful in establishing a team of staff and governors who are working in harmony with her. Teachers are enthusiastic about the way they are being trained and sharing leadership.
- The headteacher has already carried out the required formal yearly check of teachers' work, and is rightly using the results to identify with them what the whole school should work on and what training is needed. She is well aware of how pay should be linked to the quality of teaching, and what she expects of teachers who have higher salaries and greater responsibilities.
- The school has detailed records of the standards pupils have reached. This helps the headteacher and managers to identify the progress individuals and groups have made since they joined the school, and from one year to the next.
- The pupil premium money is being spent appropriately, on the eligible pupils who are not on track to reach the standards pupils do nationally or whose progress is slower than it should be, even if their standards are all right. It is being used in the same way as some of the money for other pupils who need extra help, for example, by providing time to work with an adult on their own or in pairs, doing some intensive learning.
- At the moment, partly because of the change of headteacher, the school has not tracked what

short-term impact the different ways of giving extra help are having. This means it is harder to make quick changes to help and guidance to make sure that the pupils' progress is rapidly accelerating.

- The local authority provided helpful support to the school and governors over the appointment of the new headteacher. Since then the support has been suitably light touch, as the local authority had confidence in the school's ability to carry on improving.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Many of the governors are new, or have new responsibilities. Nevertheless, those who spoke to the inspector showed a clear understanding of how good the school is, and its strengths and weaknesses, including the progress pupils make. Training is being carefully planned, and some governors have already started, or are booked onto, courses. Like the new headteacher, they are still finding out about some aspects of what happened before her arrival, such as precisely where or how effectively the pupil premium money was spent last year. However, the Chair of the Governing Body talks knowledgeably about the strategy governors are setting with the headteacher for recognising and rewarding good teachers. Governors ask questions that challenge the school about what it is doing and its results, and have ensured the school has weathered the changes of headteacher effectively.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123672
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	402187

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	111
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Henk Strik
<b>Headteacher</b>	Teresa Gilbert
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16–17 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01749 342514
<b>Fax number</b>	01749 344424
<b>Email address</b>	office@bowlish.somerset.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2012