

Holywell Church of England Primary School

Tawstock, Devon, EX31 3HZ

Inspection dates 7–8 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Pupils make good progress throughout the school. Rates of progress have improved significantly over the last two years and continue to improve. Achievement in reading and writing is already close to outstanding and in mathematics is good.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers use questioning well to ensure that pupils deepen their understanding. The feedback given to pupils through marking is particularly effective in helping them improve their work.
- The school is a harmonious community in which pupils are able to grow and thrive. The family feel of the school is highly valued by parents and pupils alike.
- Pupils feel very safe and secure in school and greatly enjoy attending.
- The new headteacher has shown outstanding leadership in moving the school forward. The quality of teaching has risen significantly and pupils' progress and attainment are rapidly showing the very positive impact of this work. Strong relationships have been formed with staff, who have worked very hard to bring about these changes. The leadership team is gradually widening as staff and governors are successfully supported to develop their roles.
- The recent federation has already proved a very positive move in providing pupils with wider experiences and staff with greater opportunities to develop their teaching skills.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress is not yet outstanding, in part because not all initiatives have had time to embed and have full effect. This is especially true in mathematics where improvement work has begun a little more recently.
- A few aspects of teaching are not yet fully promoting the best possible learning in lessons.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with half-a-day's notice and took place over two days.
- Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils and four governors. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- A range of evidence was reviewed including: the school's improvement plan; the school's data for tracking pupils' progress; monitoring reports; the work pupils were doing in their books; and a range of the school's documentation, including that relating to safeguarding.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning in seven lessons, all of which were joint observations with the headteacher, listened to a group of pupils read and made a number of short visits to other lessons.
- The inspector took into account 29 responses from parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), and 11 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Rowena Onions, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding in this school for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is below the national average. There are no pupils who are looked after or who are from service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, both at school action and at school action plus or with a statement, is below average.
- The majority of pupils are White British with others coming from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Almost all pupils speak English as their first language.
- The school does not use any alternative, off-site provision to support its pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Pupils are taught in three mixed-age group classes, with Year 1 pupils being taught with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Year 2 pupils are taught with Year 3, and Years 4, 5 and 6 are taught together.
- After a period of two years when the school was led by two acting headteachers, the school federated with Bratton Fleming Primary School in September 2012 to form the Gateway Federation. The two schools share a headteacher and a governing body. The substantive headteacher has been in post since September 2012 after one term in post as acting headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' learning from good to outstanding by ensuring that teachers:
 - give pupils more opportunity to learn to work independently
 - adapt their teaching during the course of a lesson so that they meet the emerging needs of the pupils more precisely
 - ensure there is a good balance of teacher talk and pupil activity in all lessons
 - fully embed the initiatives already in place, particularly in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter Reception with varying knowledge and skills that are overall above those expected for their age. They make good progress and most attain and many exceed the expected goals by the end of the year. Their progress in gaining language skills is of particular note. When designing and making an imaginary creature, for example, they showed themselves very capable of using a wide vocabulary to explain what they were doing.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been significantly above average over the last five years. Pupils read and write fluently, putting their knowledge of phonics (the link between sounds and letters) to good use to both read new words and to spell when writing. Scores in the phonics check at the end of Year 1 compare favourably with national figures.
- School improvement work has ensured that, after a period when standards and rates of progress fell in Years 3 to 6, progress is rapidly improving again. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 6 in 2012 rose and were above average. Scrutiny of pupils' work, lesson observations and the school's own tracking data show that standards are set to rise again this year. Rates of progress are, however, a little better in reading and writing than they are in mathematics. This is in part because pupils do not, as yet, think as rapidly as they might, especially when given a set of questions that requires them to decide which mathematical skills they need to solve a problem.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to use their reading and writing skills in other subjects and by Year 6, show good capacity to do this. They read widely both for pleasure and to gain knowledge, for example when undertaking research to support their learning about the Tudors.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do well. Well-judged interventions, including extra teaching, ensure that these pupils gain good basic skills in both English and mathematics. As a result, the vast majority of pupils attain the expected Level 4 by the time they leave the school. Pupils who are eligible for additional funding (pupil premium) make at least as good progress and attain as highly as their peers in both English and mathematics in terms of their average point scores. Funds have been clearly targeted to ensure this, with money enabling the school to provide pupils with timely support whenever there is a need.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good overall, and improving. Many initiatives, such as an increased emphasis on pupils recording their methods in mathematics, and the development of comprehension skills in reading, have been taken on in the recent past. These now require a little more time to have full impact, especially in mathematics. Lessons are well planned. Increasingly good use is being made of the tracking of pupils' progress to ensure that the needs of different groups within the class are differently planned for, so that all make good progress. In a Years 2 and 3 mathematics lesson, for example, some pupils were learning directional language while others learned about the points of the compass and a third group were using this knowledge to plot a route on a map.
- Teachers use questioning very well to promote deeper thinking and greater understanding. There are occasions, however, when teachers do not use the information they gain from questioning, or from observing pupils, to fine tune a lesson as well as they might, for example to judge whether or not to intervene to provide additional help and maximise progress.
- Pupils are very well managed. The high expectations of the way pupils will behave, and the role model of respect for others set by staff mean that lessons are conducted in an atmosphere conducive to learning.
- Lessons are brisk and purposeful. Teachers have high aspirations for their pupils and want them to learn as rapidly as possible. In some lessons, however, the teacher's desire to ensure that

pupils fully understand what they are being taught leads them to spend too much time talking. This sometimes reduces pupils' ability to concentrate and reduces the time that they have for follow-up activities. This desire to speed up learning, on occasion, contributes to a lack of opportunity for pupils to work independently when they spend too much of the lesson working with an adult. This is currently having a greater negative effect in mathematics because it is not providing pupils with the skills and practice they need in rapidly and independently identifying what mathematics they need to use to solve a question.

- Pupils are very clearly shown how they can improve their work, both through the setting and checking of individual and group targets and through marking. Marking is precise in showing pupils where they have done well and where they could improve work.
- Teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to consolidate skills in English through links with work in other subjects. Although not as plentiful, there are such links forged between mathematics and subjects such as science and geography.
- Less-able pupils are very well taught, in class and when they receive extra teaching in Reading Recovery and Numbers Count. Teaching assistants are very well trained and skilled and play a strong part in ensuring these pupils progress well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave in an exemplary way in the playground and around the school. Of note is the way in which older pupils support younger ones. Pupils are polite and friendly and are very positive about their school.
- Pupils report that there is very little bullying of any kind. They know what to do if any should arise. Pupils feel very safe and secure in school because they are well known to adults and are sure that there would always be someone to turn to if they had a problem. Parents agree that pupils are safe in school.
- The school is proactive in ensuring pupils are given the skills they need to enable them to keep safe outside school. A recent focus on e-safety has, for example, paid dividends and pupils are articulate about what they should and should not do when using computers or mobile phones.
- Pupils behave well in class and show a desire to succeed. Levels of concentration are good, only dropping a little when pupils are expected to sit for too long listening to an adult. When given the opportunity, pupils demonstrate the self-control they need to behave well when working independently. However, because they do not get as much opportunity to develop independent learning behaviour as they should, they are not able to use this capacity to promote their learning as well as they might.
- Rates of attendance have risen in response to increasingly robust measures to promote this. The clear linking of absence with progress has, for example, been effective in demonstrating to parents the effects of taking holidays in term time. Attendance is now above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher has very rapidly pulled together a team that has a shared vision and determination to become outstanding. Parents, staff and governors all comment that this shared vision is very obviously improving the school. All teachers are playing a greater role in leading the school but the school is right in planning ways to develop this further.
- The school's checks on how well it is doing are rigorous. New tracking procedures are working well in ensuring that any potential underachievement by a pupil is rapidly identified and actions taken to stop this happening.
- Much has been done since the school's previous inspection to improve the quality of teaching. The headteacher has successfully built on the work begun by the previous acting headteacher to ensure that teaching skills have been very systematically and actively developed. Teachers have been enabled to work on any relative weaknesses with the help of training, the opportunity to work with colleagues, and through the good support of the local authority. Appraisal is playing a

key part of the development of teaching. The success of recent developments shows that the school is well placed to improve further.

- The curriculum has a sharp focus on the development of basic skills. It encompasses the full range of National Curriculum subjects and it is particularly successful in promoting accomplishment in music and physical education. There are good opportunities for pupils to work outside in the school's beautiful grounds and to work with pupils from the federated school, such as engaging in a sports leader initiative. There are good links made between English and other subjects which make learning more relevant. The school is, however, right in looking at ways in which the curriculum can be improved by making it clearer to pupils what subject specific skills they are being helped to develop in subjects such as history and geography.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is promoted well through the curriculum; for example, through discussing the holocaust in history, pupils have gained understanding about the importance of respecting the rights and beliefs of others. Personal development is also very effectively supported by the family ethos evident in all the school's work. The latter also plays a strong part in ensuring pupils' well-being, alongside robust safeguarding procedures.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The current governing body has been in place since federation in September 2012. Systems are, therefore, relatively new but increasingly robust. Governors already have good knowledge of both attainment and progress, and teaching in the school and how this relates to other schools nationally. They are very supportive, but are keen to hold the school to account. Good procedures are in place to provide governors with knowledge about the quality of teaching and how this is being developed. They are well informed about systems for managing staff performance and the way that pay rises should be decided with this taken into account. Governors are becoming more proactive in gaining first-hand information through school visits and there are good plans to develop this further. The move to federation has been very well managed. Governors have ensured that finances, including the way pupil premium funding is spent, are focused on promoting pupils' achievement.

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	113380
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	405467
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	69
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Val Worms
Headteacher	Sue Denham
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 February 2011
Telephone number	01271 345908
Fax number	01271 345908
Email address	admin@holywell.devon.sch.uk

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