

Exford Church of England First School

Exford, Minehead, Somerset, TA24 7PP

Inspection dates 3–4 July 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

- Teaching is consistently good and helps all pupils to make good progress.
- Other adults, including teaching assistants, provide additional high quality support that means no pupil is left behind and every individual is well supported to make progress in line with their peers.
- Pupils are happy and safe at school. They talk confidently about their understanding of staying safe in a range of situations, including the use of the internet.
- All leaders and managers, including governors, are committed and clear in their drive to see the school continue to improve.
- The ethos of the school is wholly positive and the school sits firmly at the heart of the community it serves.
- The school makes full use of the Exmoor National Park to enable all pupils to use this unique location as an integral part of their learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not high enough. Teachers do not always vary the pace of learning or increase the level of challenge so that all pupils make rapid progress.
- Teachers' planning does not yet make full use of opportunities to promote extended writing across the full range of subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five lessons.
- She talked to parents and carers at the start of the school day and took into account the nine responses submitted by staff. There were not enough responses to the on-line questionnaire, Parent View, to provide evidence on the opinion of parents and carers.
- The inspector talked to pupils about their attitudes to school and listened to different groups of pupils read.
- The inspector met with senior and middle leaders and members of the governing body. She also spoke to a representative of the local authority about their work with the school.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Marion Hobbs, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much-smaller-than-average-size first school situated in the heart of the Exmoor National Park. There are two classes of mixed age pupils.
- All pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school is part of the Exmoor Federation. This comprises another first school, and a middle school to which all pupils move at the end of Year 4. The federation is overseen by an executive headteacher and a single governing body.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below the national average. This is additional government funding to support pupils entitled to free school meals, those in local authority care and those with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above the national average. Currently no pupils are supported by school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of teaching that is outstanding by:-
 - sharing the best practice that exists within the federation
 - developing teachers' ability to vary pace and challenge so that all pupils are well supported to make rapid progress in all subjects.
- Develop the planning of teaching and learning so that pupils can make links in their extended writing across subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All pupils are keen to learn and engage well in the wide range of activities they experience.
- They join the school with skills generally below age-related expectations and make good progress in the Reception Year because of the constant one-to-one support they receive and the stimulating range of opportunities they encounter.
- Pupils make good progress in lessons because of the consistently good teaching provided and because the small class sizes mean that each pupil is known individually and their particular needs can be addressed promptly and effectively.
- The school can demonstrate through its data that, over time, all pupils, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, make at least expected rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This includes those pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium who attain at a similar level to other pupils.
- Progress in lessons is good. Pupils are encouraged to work independently and find things out for themselves, but know that there is always an adult nearby to provide support if needed.
- The school has taken robust steps to address the teaching of sounds and letters (phonics) following disappointing results for the Year 1 pupils in the 2012 national phonics screening check. When re-tested, these pupils, now in Year 2, all passed.
- Pupils read with confidence and talk enthusiastically about the school library stock from which they choose texts to take home every evening.
- The school enables all pupils to develop their social skills well, both through the subjects they learn about in the classroom and also the wide range of after-school activities they are offered. This means that pupils are prepared as fully as possible for the next stage of their education at the middle school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching throughout the school is typically good. Teachers have high expectations and strong subject knowledge. They know how to promote good behaviour for learning, which supports all pupils' good rates of progress.
- Not all teachers have developed their skills in varying the pace of lessons and setting work that is challenging enough so that all pupils can make rapid and sustained progress. Leaders recognise that there is potential for teachers to develop these skills further through sharing best practice within the federation.
- Planning for pupils' learning is good overall. However, there are not yet enough opportunities for pupils to make links in their extended writing across subjects, especially as part of their outdoor learning.
- The use of questioning is a strength. Teachers question individual pupils effectively to probe their thinking and understanding, and this helps them to make good progress in their learning.
- The local area provides a rich, valuable resource for learning beyond the confines of the classroom that the school takes full advantage of. Strong links with Exmoor National Park help all pupils to learn in depth about the landscape and environment to which they belong. Years 3 and 4 pupils have been exploring the geography and history of the locality in relation to the ancient farmers who lived there, as well as using the landscape as an inspiration for imaginative writing.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed to work with identified groups or individual pupils who need extra support. This includes those pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium.
- Assessment is thorough and regular. Comment marking helps all pupils on a daily basis understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- The school sets homework regularly as extended research activities that link to learning in

lessons. This helps to build links between home and school through parents and carers being able to explore topics with their children.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are keen to learn, enjoy school and are confident in talking about all that they do.
- The school fosters a positive ethos at all times and is very much at the heart of the local community. Pupils' art work is regularly displayed in the village church.
- There is very little disruption to learning in lessons and should this occur it is managed swiftly and effectively by the teacher or a teaching assistant.
- Staff and parents and carers are all highly positive about the school and all it does for its pupils. Parents spoken to at the start of the school day were very happy with their children's experience.
- There are nil returns over time related to incidents of any form of bullying or racist behaviour, or any other derogatory comments.
- Pupils are sure that they are safe and well cared for at school. They understand different forms of safety, including e-safety and potential risks such as cyber bullying. They say that bullying does not happen at their school.
- Punctuality to school is generally good, although bad weather can hamper journeys for pupils living at a distance. Attendance is broadly average.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher and governing body consistently communicate high expectation and ambition.
- The Exmoor Federation has proved, over time, to be an effective organisation, with schools working together to strengthen consistency in teaching and learning. This benefits all pupils at Exford as they transfer to the middle school.
- Effective systems are in place to check on the quality of teaching across the school. The management of teachers' performance is robust and aligned to the school development plan. Teachers' progression up the pay spine and the link to the Teachers' Standards are also built into this cycle.
- The school's view of its own effectiveness is accurate and links into the strategic work across the federation to the benefit of all pupils. The local authority is confident that the school provides a good standard of education for all pupils and has supported the school effectively in its strengthening of teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. Rich and varied experiences are rooted in the local surroundings wherever possible, and this gives all pupils knowledge and understanding that will enable them to become future custodians of this unique environment, should they so choose.
- The school has good links with external partners as well as being at the centre of the local community. Parents and carers are known individually and support is readily available for any area of need.
- Pupil premium funding is allocated effectively to support eligible pupils who are potentially at risk of underperforming.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences are threaded through the curriculum. Pupils benefit from a wide range of participation in local and regional musical and artistic events.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are committed to ensuring the best possible education for all pupils. They have a clear strategic vision across the federation and use this effectively as part of monitoring the work of the school, including that of the performance management of teachers. Governors have an accurate view of the school's performance compared to that of others. They are well-briefed in their roles and take advantage of training provided by the local authority whenever

possible to help them in discharging their duties. They manage school finances effectively, including the deployment of pupil premium funding. Governors are robust and effective in holding the headteacher and other leaders to account across all their work.

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	123756
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	402798

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	24
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jackie Smith
Headteacher	Jeremy Weedon
Date of previous school inspection	29–30 June 2010
Telephone number	01643 831365
Fax number	01643 831365
Email address	Sch.150@educ.somerset.gov.uk

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