

# Longvernal Primary School

Clapton Road, Midsomer Norton, Radstock, BA3 2LT

**Inspection dates** 15–16 October 2013

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement is not high enough. While progress is steadily increasing, it is not happening rapidly enough to ensure a necessary rise in attainment. Pupils reach attainment levels that are below the national average and their achievement requires improvement.
- Teaching is not consistent across all classes. Lessons do not fully stretch the more able and activities are not always pitched at the right level to enable all pupils to make better progress.
- Marking is not consistently good across the school. Staff do not ensure pupils fully understand how to develop their work and they do not always check that improvements are made as a result.
- Although members of the governing body are highly supportive of the school's efforts, they do not sufficiently challenge leaders and managers to help them bring about improvements in achievement.
- The checks leaders and managers make on teaching and learning are not rigorous enough to ensure teaching is always good or better.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and senior leadership team have ensured that progress in English and mathematics has risen and that more pupils are reaching higher levels in tests.
- Extra funds to support pupils with their learning (pupil premium) have enabled those who are eligible and those with special educational needs to make similar progress.
- Pupils enjoy school and there are warm relationships between them and their teachers. Bullying and poor behaviour are very uncommon and the staff are highly supportive of both the pupils and their families. They ensure the safety and care of the pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at the school's website and a range of documents, including its policies and assessment records.
- The inspector observed seven lessons taught by four teachers, including three observations with senior staff. Meetings were held with staff, pupils, parents, carers and members of the governing body, and a telephone meeting was held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 12 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).

## Inspection team

Carolyn Carnaghan, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is below average in size when compared with all primary schools. The proportions of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for pupil premium support (additional money allocated to schools by the government for specific groups) are above average.
- Pupils are predominantly White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported on school action is above average. The proportions supported on school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are also above average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to raise attainment and progress by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve to promote accelerated progress
  - ensuring teaching is well paced and challenging for all groups of pupils
  - checking that marking is thoroughly carried out by all staff and that pupils fully understand how to improve their work
  - making sure phonics is taught consistently well throughout the school.
- Promote the impact of leaders and managers on teaching through:
  - improving checks made on teaching and learning by leaders and rigorously following up on areas of concern
  - making sure the governing body fully challenges the school across all of its activities, particularly about the accuracy of its checks on teaching, so that all lessons are at least good.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- The progress of pupils is not rising fast enough and their achievement requires improvement. Lessons do not fully ensure pupils are always challenged through tasks that match their ability and aptitudes. They are not consistently good enough to raise attainment. Although the school has closed gaps between subjects, achievement is not consistent across reading, writing and mathematics.
- The teaching of phonics (linking sounds and letters) is well taught in Reception and Years 1 and 2, but this is not kept up sufficiently higher up the school, and this is holding pupils back in their reading and writing.
- There are inconsistencies in progress between classes with more rapid gains currently being made in Key Stage 1 than 2. Pupils on school action, school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs are making similar rates of progress to their peers, linking directly to the quality of teaching in their classes.
- Pupils entitled to pupil premium funding have benefited from the school's allocation of these funds to ensure they are well supported in lessons. The high numbers of pupils who receive extra help have been targeted for one-to-one and small-group sessions with dedicated learning assistants. This means their needs are being well catered for and their progress is at least keeping up with that of others
- Their attainment still lags behind in some areas. In Year 6, these pupils are two years behind in reading, two terms ahead in writing and two terms behind in mathematics. However, more pupils in Years 2 and 6 are reaching higher levels in the national assessments and tests. The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well.
- In the most successful lessons, pupils make fast, sustained progress. In a Years 1, 2 and 3 phonics lesson, where sounds and letters were linked, pupils worked in small groups. The teacher ensured her group enjoyed a lively session where they practised recognising and using particular sounds, linking movements to those sounds, testing each other out and showing off their skills. Where learning is less robust, pupils sometimes have their achievement curtailed by tasks that are too limited, cut short because they are too easy, or not well matched to their abilities.
- When children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in Reception, much is done to help prepare them for the main school. They work on developing their skills across the early learning areas and most soon begin to feel happy and confident. The school provides excellent support for families of these young children as they begin their education. The teaching of reading and writing is good and there are numerous opportunities to explore their world, play and learn about shapes and number. There is a large outside space with plenty of interesting activities that link up with the indoor learning. This helps build children's confidence and knowledge. Their attainment by the end of Reception is still below average in most elements of their development.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching in lessons is too inconsistent across the school. Pupils' progress is hampered where the setting of pupils for some subjects in groups with a wide age range means that work is not always fully matched to the needs of pupils present. The chosen subject matter and style of learning does not always fulfil pupils' interests.
- Targets that teachers give pupils are not consistently referred to, or used to anchor learning. This means that pupils sometimes miss chances to take their work further and end points are limited. Pupils are not always familiar with, or understand, their own targets so it is hard for them to improve work themselves. Where pupils' progress is weaker, teachers do not give pupils enough challenge to fulfil their needs or the challenges are too difficult and everybody struggles.

- Marking is also inconsistent. The school's clear marking policy is not fully applied by all adults involved in teaching and supporting lessons. For example, where a pupil was asked to always use capital letters and full stops, his work was not checked across future lessons to ensure that he did so. The marking did not refer to this again and so his progress in English was slowed.
- The best lessons are well paced and fun; pupils are clear about what is required and there are no limits on their achievements. Marking ensures pupils understand their next steps, and staff follow up on further comments from pupils and work carried out in response to the marking. For example, in an English lesson, pupils were asked to be reporters, checking on what a character in a story said about himself, was it true or false? This inspired the pupils to try hard to catch him out. The teacher also introduced an element of competition into the proceedings.
- Assessments are regularly carried out but the results are not always fully understood by pupils, parents and carers. Staff are becoming more conversant with the results of testing, and this information is being increasingly shared and used to help plan future learning.
- Reading is adequately taught but achievement lags behind in this area. The expert teaching of linking letters with sounds that is seen lower down the school is now being disseminated across classes. However, pupils cannot all use these skills yet to help them with difficult books and in their writing. The school is working hard to develop interesting experiences for pupils on which to base their extended writing and this is proving successful. For example, the outdoor learning that goes on, trips to summer camp and visits all provide subjects to write about.
- The many teaching and learning assistants that support pupils with particular needs work hard to ensure individuals catch up with the skills they lack. Generally, the work of such assistants is well planned and allows pupils to rejoin their classes quickly. Sometimes, though, planning is not sufficiently robust and the skills of these dedicated professionals are not put to effective use supporting pupils.

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

- Pupils generally behave very well but their conduct occasionally slips when teaching is less than good. Most pupils enjoy lessons and are enthusiastic learners; this is particularly clear where challenges meet their needs. Pupils care for one another, share their ideas freely and appreciate being given responsibilities, such as teaching another pupil something learned.
- Teachers foster good relationships with their pupils. The school is clearly a warm and caring place where it is the norm to help others, volunteer and give of yourself.
- Pupils understand the need to play safely at break times and lunchtimes. Their conduct around the school site is good and overall the school is safe. Parents and carers support this and have few concerns about safety. They and their children report that bullying or any forms of victimisation, including on the internet, are extremely rare.
- The mixture of subjects offered provides pupils with ways of learning about the world and the school makes great efforts to deliver trips and experiences for all pupils. For instance, they recently won an eco prize at a prestigious local event, beating several other schools in the process. Those with skills in mathematics have been given chances to experience further challenges at secondary school to help support their further achievements. These opportunities all provide extra ways for pupils to learn how to grow towards the next stage of their education, to broaden horizons and foster their enthusiasm for learning. Pupils speak very highly of such occasions.

### **The leadership and management** require improvement

- Leaders and managers have ensured a slow rise in pupils' progress, but teaching and learning are not yet consistently good. This is because the checks carried out by leaders have not been challenging enough to eliminate less effective teaching. While regular checks on lessons are undertaken, the follow up to address areas of concern is sometimes not rigorous enough and, as a result, improvements to the quality of teaching are not made rapidly enough.

- Assessment information is gathered and analysed, and is starting to be used to hold staff to account for the progress of their pupils. Where appropriate, this also leads to staff training opportunities, but the school acknowledges that increasing these opportunities is an area to develop.
- Given the school's recent track record, it has capacity to further improve. The local authority provides adequate support to enable the school to improve but has not challenged it sufficiently to do better.
- The mix of subjects and experiences that the school offers meets requirements and provides a range of opportunities for pupils to take part in sport, to improve their fitness. The school has yet to receive its extra primary schools sport funding. There is plenty of music, drama and art within lessons, after school and at lunchtimes. Wherever possible, teachers make links between subjects to engage pupils' interests more closely. This is an area that the school is focusing on.
- Pupils benefit from the school's provision for their development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural values. The warm atmosphere of the school and pupils' cheerful attitudes are a good testament to their social and moral development. Assemblies are places for sharing time together, often through singing and reflection.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body work very hard to support the school and have a developing understanding of pupils' achievement and how it relates to national averages. They use this information to challenge the school. However, they do not have enough first-hand information about the quality of teaching and are not rigorous enough in promoting improvements. Members of the governing body have a reasonable grasp of how teachers' performance relates to their pay progression. While members have a very good understanding of the school's local context, this sometimes means they do not challenge the school about pupils' academic performance sufficiently. They understand the importance of keeping pupils safe and this contributes to the school meeting all requirements for safeguarding.

## 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>	109107
<b>Local authority</b>	Bath and North East Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	426729

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	95
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dianne Mears
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Richardson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15–16 September 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01761 412777
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