

Burlescombe Church of England Primary School

Burlescombe, Tiverton, EX16 7JH

Inspection dates 16–17 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Weaknesses in the quality of teaching over time mean that there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills in reading and writing. However, pupils are now making better progress than in the past.
- Standards in reading remain below average at the end of Year 6. Pupils' phonics and comprehension skills are not secure.
- Children in Reception do not develop the skills in reading and writing they need to start in Year 1.
- Pupils' attainment in writing has been below average at the end of Year 2 for several years and improvement is slow.
- Teaching does not always ensure that the tasks set for pupils help them to make good progress.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning require improvement. Pupils do not always take enough care to present their work neatly, and to use correct spellings, punctuation and grammar when writing.
- The literacy leader has not taken swift enough action when pupils were found not to be making enough progress in reading and some aspects of writing. As a result, improvement has been slower than in mathematics.

The school has the following strengths

- Over the last year, the executive headteacher, supported by the local authority and governors, has eliminated very weak teaching. This is starting to raise the level of pupils' achievements, particularly in mathematics and for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Pupils report that they feel safe; parents are equally confident that their children are looked after well.
- Through topics and special events, the school promotes important personal values and prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited seven lessons to observe teaching and learning. All teachers were observed. In addition, a number of short visits were made to lessons to observe reading activities.
- The inspector looked at past and current information about pupils' progress and at pupils' work in books and on display.
- The school's assessments of its strengths, school improvement planning, curriculum (the range of subjects and other activities taught) planning, and documents relating to behaviour and safeguarding were examined.
- The inspector met formally with small groups of pupils as well as meeting pupils informally at playtimes and lunchtimes to talk about their learning and to find out what they thought of the school. She also heard pupils read.
- Meetings were held with staff and a group of governors and a telephone conversation took place with a representative of the local authority.
- Parents were spoken to informally at the start and end of the school day. There were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and so responses in the school's last two surveys of parents were considered.
- The inspector took note of 10 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Georgina Beasley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Burlescombe Church of England Primary is far smaller than an average-sized school. Some year groups are very small and so all three classes include pupils from at least two different year groups.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is far lower than that found in most schools. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Reception age children attend full time and are taught in one class which includes Year 1 pupils.
- An on-site nursery and before-and after-school care club are managed independently of the school and not included in this inspection.
- The executive headteacher is also the headteacher of Webbers CE Primary School. The two schools are federated and have the same governing body. Webbers School was not included in this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to good or better levels across the school by:
 - ensuring that pupils' learning is checked regularly to identify when and what support to give to those pupils who are struggling
 - giving further challenge to those pupils who find learning easier and to those who have already mastered the skills previously taught.
- Improve pupils' attitudes and achievement by setting clear expectations for presenting their work and giving pupils clear guidance on how to:
 - check their work accurately and correct any mistakes that they make
 - use the correct spelling, grammar and punctuation
 - form letters correctly and use their best handwriting.
- Prepare children for Year 1 by developing their reading and writing skills better in Reception.
- Ensure that regular checks on pupils' progress in understanding of letter sounds and combinations (phonics), spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting result in effective actions to improve these in all classes.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The leadership and management require improvement because actions taken to remedy weaknesses following the previous inspection have been slow until recently. Improvements to the quality of teaching, secured by the strong and capable leadership of the executive headteacher, have resulted in pupils achieving better in mathematics.
- The leadership of reading and writing has not been strong enough over time to ensure pupils do as well as they can in all aspects of both subjects. While the school recognised there were weaknesses in the teaching of phonics and in pupils' writing skills, too little has been done until recently to tackle all of the weaknesses.
- The local authority, together with the executive headteacher, acted quickly last year when it found that the school's performance was falling, particularly in mathematics. As a result of support from specialist teachers and strong subject leadership, teaching improved in this subject. Support has not been as effective in tackling weaknesses in pupils' literacy skills.
- In its drive to improve how the school promotes equality, the school has focused on increasing the proportion of pupils making and exceeding expected progress, including the most able pupils and those who are disabled and/or have special educational needs. The school's close work with staff from the federated school has strengthened the leadership of mathematics and special educational needs. As a result, pupils are making faster progress this year. Leadership of other subjects has not been as effective.
- Since her appointment almost two years ago, the executive headteacher has worked closely with the governing body to make an accurate assessment of the school's strengths and areas requiring improvement. The executive headteacher and governors have together successfully tackled some underperformance of staff, have given clear guidance and the training and support required for teaching to improve. The challenging targets set during regular meetings with staff inform decisions about future pay and promotion.
- The school promotes equality and diversity well through well-planned termly topics that cover a broad and balanced range of subjects. Activities promote important personal values and prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. For example, through studying Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech, pupils considered democracy and individual equality and liberty.
- Staff consistently follow the school's safeguarding procedures. The school checks diligently the identity, relevant qualifications and suitability of staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors. All staff and volunteers are trained in first aid and child protection. The school site is checked regularly for defects and records indicate that any found are put right quickly.
- Funds from the government for sport education have paid for staff training and additional opportunities for pupils to take part in a range of sports. As a result, the whole school goes swimming for one term each year and more girls are taking part in sport than had previously been the case.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The shared governing body has given good support to the school's leadership since it was formed two years ago. This has been partially successful in increasing the pace of improvement in mathematics. The pace of improvement has been slower in literacy. Governors understand the information that they have about pupils' progress and are clear about the school's strengths and areas requiring improvement, including in teaching. They use this knowledge to ask the school probing questions about achievement, and to plan and deploy the budget to support those areas identified in need of improvement. The decision to maintain three smaller classes has been part of this process. The governing body ensures all statutory requirements are met, including those relating to safeguarding. Governors check to make sure money is spent properly, including the extra funds for pupil premium, sport and for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those who receive the pupil premium.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Some pupils do not take enough care to do their best work. Pupils fail to ensure they use correct spellings, punctuation and grammar, even those they have learned and when they recognise that they have made mistakes. Handwriting and presentation are often untidy.

- The school logs the small number of behavioural incidents fully and subsequent actions ensure these are not repeated. The number of exclusions is small. Pupils confirm that behaviour is improving and is mostly good again with fewer disruptions to learning. They understand the importance of maintaining this good behaviour over time.
- Pupils' conduct is good. Relationships are positive and so there is a friendly, family feel in classes. Pupils mostly listen attentively and settle quickly to tasks. When they are asked to move to groups, they do so immediately, collecting everything they need for the lesson on the way.
- Pupils talk respectfully about other people. Elections for house captains and school council promote a good understanding of democracy. Through religious education and topics, pupils develop good knowledge and respect of different religions including their own. Through playing sport, pupils have a positive sense of fair play.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe. They know about the potential dangers when using the internet, including knowing that they must not access social networking. They know what to do if they come across something they do not like or which they feel is unsuitable.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including those of a racist or homophobic nature. Pupils say that no bullying occurs and are confident that any concerns will be handled positively and quickly by the school.
- Attendance has been above average for several years. Very few pupils are persistently absent as they enjoy going to school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement. Historical weaknesses in the teaching of reading and writing are reflected in gaps in pupils' skills. The teaching of phonics has not helped some pupils in Reception and Years 1 and 2 to read unfamiliar words. Teaching has not provided enough effective activities to help pupils close gaps in their phonics knowledge and skills. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 read widely and often, but have not had the comprehension skills that they need to reach above average levels until this year.
- Teaching often ensures pupils' learning builds on what pupils already know and can do, despite classes having different ages. However, checks are not always made quickly enough to provide additional support or further challenge if pupils find the work too easy or too difficult. At these times, pupils' progress slows.
- The atmosphere in lessons is positive and so pupils are confident to make mistakes when learning something for the first time. Expectations for pupils to use the correct spellings, grammar and punctuation in their writing are not always emphasised and so mistakes are often repeated in books.
- Teaching assistants check that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs understand what teachers are saying during whole-class introductions and when they start working on their own. Many are able to complete the tasks set.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved. Much of the current teaching in this subject is good. Pupils use the knowledge they have about numbers to investigate numbers and solve number problems that are relevant to their daily lives. For example, pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 worked out how to find multiples of seven higher than 70 by doubling smaller sums. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 calculated the change they would receive from five and 10 pounds when buying a snack from the class cafe.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because, until recently, progress has not been consistently good in all subjects for all groups of pupils. Fewer pupils made expected progress compared to others nationally, until last year.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 is average in reading and mathematics. Pupils' attainment in writing has been below average for the last two years and improvement has been slow. An average proportion of pupils reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check for the last two years. Despite this, pupils' phonics skills are not strong enough to support secure spelling and reading.
- Attainment in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test has been significantly below average for the last two years at the end of Year 6 because pupils' skills in these aspects are weak. However, pupils in Years 3 to 6 use their good speaking and listening abilities to discuss and think up interesting and adventurous words in their writing. Attainment is close to average in this aspect of writing. Attainment in

reading remains below average.

- Attainment in mathematics at the end of Year 6 was significantly below average up until the end of the 2013 academic year because progress was too slow. Attainment improved significantly last year due to faster progress. All pupils made at least expected progress and nearly half made quicker progress than expected. This improving rate of progress is being maintained across the school this year.
- The most able pupils have not made the progress they should over time, but this is now improving. A higher number of pupils are on track to reach above average levels of attainment this year. Occasionally, they still find some tasks too easy and this lack of challenge limits the progress they make.
- The very small number of pupils receiving additional support through the pupil premium make similar progress to their classmates. In 2013, there was no gap in their attainment with classmates at the end of Year 6, except in reading where they were about a term behind. They were behind pupils nationally by almost a year in mathematics and two years behind in reading. Currently, there are no gaps in the attainment of these pupils with other pupils in the school and pupils nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive the support that they need to make good progress. Many are now reaching the levels typical for their age and some are doing better than this. As for all pupils, learning and progress in mathematics are faster than in reading and writing.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- The early years provision requires improvement because children do not make consistently good progress in all areas of learning and development. Children make good progress in their personal development and are confident to try activities they have not met before. Children make particularly good progress in their listening skills because teachers make clear the expectations for good behaviour and listening to each other. Many children do not have the skills and knowledge in reading and writing they need when they move to Year 1 because activities do not always build on what they already know and can do.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good. Assessment is not used skilfully enough to plan activities that build children's progress from their starting point. As a result, activities are too easy for some children and too difficult for others.
- Children behave well. Positive relationships with adults and other children mean that children enjoy school and feel safe. They take part in a range of relevant activities, some of which are planned by adults and some that they plan themselves.
- Support from the school's leadership means that, despite requiring improvement, the quality of teaching has got better recently. Children's attainment at the end of Reception rose last year and is higher this year. Children's personal, social and emotional development is catered for effectively as information about their personal development is used well.

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	113350
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	443926

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	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John McIlwain
Headteacher	Deborah Eveleigh
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 February 2011
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