

# Longvernal Primary School

Clapton Road, Midsommer Norton, Radstock BA3 2LT

**Inspection dates** 21–22 October 2015

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The inspirational headteacher is the driving force behind the school's rapid improvement. Her empowering leadership has strengthened contributions from leaders at all levels.
- As a team, leaders, including governors, have secured good teaching and accurate assessment and faster pupils' progress. They demonstrate a strong capacity to improve the school further.
- All staff and governors work very effectively to safeguard pupils and to establish supportive relationships with parents. These help pupils to feel very safe, greatly enjoy school and lead to above-average attendance.
- Teaching continues to be strengthened by staff engaging in closely focused training, and willingly collaborating with each other to improve their skills. As a result, a significantly increased proportion of pupils make better-than-expected progress as they move through the school.
- Pupils' increasingly above-average levels of attainment at the end of Year 6 securely reflect good achievement, from fluctuating, but overall below, typical starting points for their age.
- The pupils' good behaviour and outstanding personal development and well-being are underpinned by very supportive relationships with each other and adults. As a result, pupils receive a significant boost to their self-confidence that underpins and supports their positive attitudes to learning.
- Much improved and stimulating learning activities ensure that children in the early years experience a good start to school and achieve well.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' handwriting skills are not always developed as consistently and effectively as their ability to write descriptively and expressively.
- A minority of pupils, more often girls, do not develop their basic number skills quickly enough to enable them to solve mathematical problems confidently.
- At times, children in the early years do not have enough opportunities to extend their early reading and writing skills when learning outdoors.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress to outstanding by:
  - strengthening the teaching of handwriting
  - improving pupils' ability, especially that of girls, to quickly recall number facts and so improve their problem-solving skills.
  
- Provide more opportunities for children in the early years to develop their early reading and writing skills when learning outdoors.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The very capable and much respected new headteacher has provided the vision that has driven the school forward at a rapid pace since the previous inspection. Her infectious empowerment of leaders at all levels, including governors, has swiftly raised morale to secure highly effective team leadership and management.
- By working in unison, leaders, including governors, have also quickly built a community where parents are welcomed and involved and pupils feel very safe because they are safeguarded securely. For example, leaders and managers ensure that all staff are vetted thoroughly and that risk assessments are drawn up to keep pupils safe in school and on trips. Leaders have also established a culture where good teaching and pupils' behaviour can thrive.
- Senior and middle leaders (those responsible for particular age groups and subjects) check the school's performance extremely effectively. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection. It ensures that leaders, including governors, gain a very good understanding of the school's strengths, and at an early stage, identify and tackle what needs to be improved very effectively.
- Leaders' work in improving the consistency and quality of teachers' marking has been a key improvement since the previous inspection, quickening pupils' progress. The increasing proportion of pupils across the school now making better-than-expected progress further demonstrates the school's strong capacity to continue improvement into the future.
- The headteacher ensures that all staff benefit from well-planned management of their performance. All staff are given challenging targets to improve their work and pupils' learning. Very effective training and rigorous checks on the staff's performance have led to the good and increasingly better quality of teaching and additional support, and to pupils' rapidly improving progress. Excellent leadership is also evident in the accurately planned and very effective use of additional funding. This has resulted in disadvantaged pupils in receipt of the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs all making equally good progress. This also illustrates the school's diligence in promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating discrimination.
- The school provides a broad, lively and comprehensive curriculum. Leaders constantly check the range of activities provided to ensure pupils' good progress across all required subjects. Staff make particularly successful use of the school's spacious and well-equipped grounds to enthuse pupils' enjoyment of school and widen their skills. For example, outdoor investigations during outdoor activities, trips and stimulating expressive arts events all combine well to significantly boost pupils' self-confidence in learning.
- The school's success in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is seen, for example, when pupils exchange letters with friends in a school in Uganda. They also experience visits to culturally diverse areas such as London. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain through discussion about British traditions and values, such as democracy, respect and friendship, during assemblies and in personal and social lessons.
- Leaders ensure that additional physical education funding is used very effectively. Funds are used to employ specialist coaches, to provide more sports clubs, involve pupils in competitions and introduce a broader range of sports, including tri-golf and gymnastics. These have increased the number of pupils who enjoy participating and competing in sport, and consequently living a healthier lifestyle. For example, currently 40% of pupils in Key Stage 1 and 77% in Key Stage 2 now attend at least one after-school sports club each week, a much greater proportion than previously.
- The local authority has contributed well to the school's improvement, including through training for teachers and governors.
- **The governance of the school**
- Governors have significantly strengthened their work since the previous inspection. They have completed an audit of their skills and have raised their expertise by engaging fully in training, including training on safeguarding pupils. Following a comprehensive review of their roles and responsibilities, governors now check the performance of the school very effectively and fully hold school leaders to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements. Governors fully meet their statutory obligations.
- Governors receive detailed evaluations of the work of senior and subject leaders to understand and check that teaching has a positive impact on pupils' progress. Governors also visit the school regularly to see the work of the school for themselves. As a result, governors now have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas in need of further development. This enables them to contribute strongly to

further improvement. Governors know, for example, that following its improvement, pupils' attainment now compares favourably with the national average.

- Governors have been very effective in helping to secure to pupils' above average attendance. This has been achieved, for example, by governors establishing good links with parents, encouraging rewards for pupils' good attendance and fully supporting the headteacher in rigorously checking any reasons for absence.
- Recent appointments to the governing body have strengthened checks to ensure that the pupil premium and sport and physical education funding are used effectively.
- Governors also contribute diligently to plans for school improvement and check to make sure that staff pay is linked to improving teaching and pupils' progress.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good**

- The quality of teaching continues to improve. All teachers, including a few experienced staff who are new to the school, are responding with confidence to the extremely effective leadership of teaching and high ambition of the relatively new headteacher to improve pupils' learning.
- Teachers welcome increased responsibilities, and their refreshed high morale and very strong teamwork have raised expectations. As a result, pupils' learning and progress continue to improve, particularly when challenged to express their ideas and to collaborate in undertaking research using computers and books. For example, during religious education, enthused by the teacher's challenge, pupils in Year 5 'couldn't wait' to investigate their various topics when studying Judaism.
- A key element underpinning the improved quality of teaching and pupils' achievements since the previous inspection, evident across the school, is the care taken by staff to boost pupils' self-confidence. This is evident in the way teachers support vulnerable pupils and, at times, other pupils whose interest in learning in class might slip. For example, teachers provide stimulating outdoor learning activities for pupils during which the pupils rediscover the joy of finding things out for themselves. This accelerates these pupils' progress.
- Teachers and capable teaching assistants also ensure that the support given to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs fully includes them in learning and the day-to-day life of the school. The support for the few pupils with very complex needs is often exemplary in these respects.
- All staff have benefited from specialist training and cooperate well with each other to provide strengthened teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make). This is boosting pupils' confidence and enabling them to read more for interest, as well as using their reading skills to improve their learning across the range of subjects.
- Teachers question pupils very effectively to assess their understanding and to extend their spoken vocabulary. Teachers have also targeted the development of pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar successfully in recent years. These aspects were not only evident in pupils' much improved results in national assessments, but are also clearly seen in the good quality of pupils' descriptive writing.
- There is less consistent emphasis on improving pupils' handwriting, particularly to write in joined-up text. Similarly, the ability of some pupils, particularly girls, to quickly recall number facts is not yet fully established. These relative weaknesses, now identified and being targeted swiftly by teachers, sometimes reduce pupils' ability to write more fluently and affect the confidence of some pupils, mostly girls, in solving mathematical problems.
- Teachers have improved the way in which they assess and mark pupils' work, and now give good guidance to pupils about what they have done well. Teachers also give the pupils clear information about how to improve. They also give specific targets to pupils, and these have been instrumental in raising expectations and increasing pupils' ability to learn and make better progress.
- Teachers challenge the most-able pupils effectively and encourage them to think for themselves. This is particularly evident in mathematics and in spelling, punctuation and grammar, where the increase in the proportion of pupils demonstrating higher-than-expected levels of skill shows that they are progressing well.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding
- The parents' overwhelmingly very positive responses on 'Parent View', and all those expressed in discussions with the inspector, accurately describe pupils' excellent personal development. Parents particularly welcome the diligence shown by staff in caring for their children's welfare. Pupils are kept, and feel, very safe, and by following consistent encouragement from staff, they quickly learn and interact willingly and supportively with each other while at school.
- The pupils themselves also emphasise the high quality of care they receive from adults, with pupils on the school council confidently stating that, 'We feel very safe because there is no bullying', and 'We are all one happy family at this school'.
- Pupils know about the different types of bullying that could occur, for example, cyber-bullying using computers, and verbal and physical bullying. Pupils talk about the school values of respect and friendliness and explain credibly how they take care of each other at school.
- Pupils also describe how adults listen to their ideas and how they are enabled to raise money themselves to support school trips by holding bring-and-buy and cake sales.
- Pupils take their responsibilities seriously, for example as members of the school council and newly formed equality group. They show a good understanding of the needs of others and eagerly describe how they exchange letters with pupils in a school in Uganda. Pupils also talk knowledgeably about their visits to Bath, Bristol and London, and older pupils show a good understanding of modern Britain's mixed cultural heritage.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- At times, such as in assemblies, when using computers, during outdoor activities and in breakfast club, pupils' behaviour is exemplary and learning is enriched.
- School records show that incidents of inappropriate behaviour have been much reduced in recent years and are now very rare. Currently, a few pupils with behavioural needs are being sensitively supported and are responding well by behaving sensibly more consistently.
- Pupils demonstrate good attitudes and most were fully engaged in their learning during the inspection. On occasions, though, a few pupils lose concentration when not directly supported by an adult and the quality of their learning is reduced.
- Pupils are particularly courteous and respectful towards visitors and show pride in their school. The pupils and their parents also expressed appreciation of how the school has a respected place in the local community.
- Pupils say they love coming to school and appreciate the rewards for good attendance that have helped to improve and secure above-average attendance.

## Outcomes for pupils are good

- Pupils' progress has improved rapidly over the past 18 months. Attainment is now above the national average in reading and mathematics, and closer to what is expected nationally in writing. This shows that pupils make good progress overall and achieve well from their differing starting points.
- Pupils' skills are also higher across the school, with increasing numbers of pupils showing higher-than-expected attainment for their age, and making rapid progress.
- Staff in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2 have improved their teaching of phonics in recent years. Consequently, pupils' reading skills are now developed effectively. For example, the pupils' steadily improving, and at least average, performance in the Year 1 phonics screening check shows their quicker progress in reading.
- Pupils in all parts of the school are developing their speaking and listening skills very successfully. This is often in response to the teachers' skilled questioning. It is also because pupils 'have a story to tell', for

example about their experiences during outdoor activities and during trips to learn about life skills, such as safety in the home.

- Pupils' significantly increased, and now above-average, attainment in reading assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6 further represents the pupils' stronger reading skills. Pupils now read confidently to enrich their learning across the range of subjects and are well placed to continue good learning when they leave the school.
- Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school. A significantly increasing number of pupils are now making even quicker progress, especially in developing their skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar. This is increasingly the case across Years 2 to 6, where pupils frequently have their skills boosted and are enthused by a combination of interesting learning, challenges and additional adult support.
- All pupils, but especially the most able, particularly relish the teachers' raised expectations and challenging teaching. Their improved, and now good, progress is seen in the now above-average proportion of pupils attaining higher-than-expected levels, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and others arriving later in the school year from other schools, make good progress. This is because they are also deriving significant benefit from having their needs identified and supported at an earlier stage than in the past. Often the individual support provided for pupils with complex learning and physical needs is exemplary, especially in valuing pupils' efforts and including them fully in the day-to-day life of the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils supported by additional pupil premium funding also receive extra adult help. Leaders have strengthened the use of this funding in recent years to ensure that these pupils also have their learning needs addressed at an early stage. As a result, the disadvantaged pupils also make at least good progress. Their progress is sometimes better than their classmates in school and is better overall than other disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- Pupils are improving their mathematical and writing skills at a faster rate now than in the past. However, at times, pupils' less-developed handwriting skills still constrain their ability to express their ideas as fluently as they would wish. A minority of pupils, most often girls, also have difficulty recalling number facts quickly enough to tackle solving mathematical problems confidently and this too limits their progress in this aspect of the subject.

## Early years provision

**is good**

- Leadership of the early years is good. The significant improvement of the early years provision since the previous inspection also reflects the strong and very effective support given to its continued development from the headteacher and governors.
- Children enter the Reception Year with skills that are below levels typical for their age. They make a good beginning in response to effective teaching and stimulating learning activities, especially in the recently much-improved outdoor area.
- The teacher and teaching assistant in the combined Reception Year and Year 1 class work well as a team to sustain good links with parents. They ensure that children are kept safe and that all the statutory welfare requirements are fully met. As a result, the children feel very safe, behave extremely well and experience a confidence-boosting start to school.
- Staff check the children's progress carefully and keep good records of their progress, increasingly by using hand-held computers. The teacher and teaching assistant share their observations with each other and with parents. This helps them to make sure that the activities and support given to the children are adapted as necessary to sustain the children's progress in all areas of learning.
- Teaching is good and staff make effective use of the much improved and interesting indoor and outside facilities. Children benefit from good opportunities to learn by increasingly choosing their own activities when learning in the secure outdoor area.
- Children enjoy sharing ideas, for example when cutting 'spaghetti' or making 'chocolate cakes' from modelling material. They develop their counting and mathematical skills well by identifying and sorting shapes and by counting numbers together.
- The stimulating facilities provided, for example the role-play fire station and climbing equipment, are used well to develop the children's physical and language development. During the inspection, children really enjoyed experiencing a 'Bear Hunt' and extending their creative and story planning skills. As a result, children make particularly good progress in their personal development and develop a keen interest in

learning together.

- Children engage in activities wholeheartedly when learning outside, but opportunities are sometimes missed to develop their early writing and reading skills further on these occasions. Consequently, whilst children make good progress overall during their Reception Year, a minority do not always develop their reading and writing skills to best effect. Even so, staff have improved the way they plan and teach phonics, and this has increased the number of children reaching a good level of development in recognising letters and sounds and writing letters and words correctly.
- By the time they end their year in Reception, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development matches that found nationally. This reflects good progress from levels of skills on entry that are typically below those for their age, and shows that children are well prepared for future learning by the time they enter Year 1.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	109107
<b>Local authority</b>	Bath and North-East Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002451

This inspection 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>	100
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	the governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kerrie Courtier
<b>Telephone number</b>	01761 412777
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.longvernal.com">www.longvernal.com</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:Longvernal_pri@bathnes.gov.uk">Longvernal_pri@bathnes.gov.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 October 2013

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils attending the school are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority) is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children experience early years provision on a full-time basis in a combined Reception and Year 1 class.
- The school provides its own breakfast club.
- A Nursery unit operates on the school site. It is managed privately and so was not part of this inspection.
- A new headteacher commenced her duties in the spring of 2014

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons and saw the work of six teachers. He was accompanied by the headteacher during most of these visits to lessons.
- A wide range of documents were scrutinised, including records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures and the school's analysis of how well it is improving. The inspector examined the school's systems for checking progress and records of checks on the quality of teaching.
- The inspector talked to individual pupils and specific groups of pupils about the school and their work. He listened to individual pupils read, attended an assembly and observed pupils experiencing outdoor learning. The inspector also looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects and classes.
- The inspector held meetings with members of the governing body. He also held meetings with school staff, mainly senior and middle leaders. The inspector met with pupil members of the school council and with representatives from the local authority. The inspector also held a telephone conversation with Her Majesty's Inspector who had been working with the school.
- The inspector took account of the views expressed in the 53 online responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and in 17 staff questionnaires. He also gathered the views of several parents during informal meetings at the school during the inspection.
- The inspector considered the school's use of the primary physical education and sport funding and the pupil premium.

## Inspection team

Alex Baxter, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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