

Churchfield Church School

Burham Road, Highbridge, TA9 3JF

Inspection dates 18–19 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Strengthened leadership, including by governors and representatives of the multi-academy trust, has not been functioning long enough to secure consistently good or better teaching across the school.
- Leaders and managers have yet to gain the confidence of some staff and parents in their efforts to lift pupils' achievement.
- Teachers do not always challenge pupils sufficiently or expect them to work hard enough. As a result, behaviour for learning requires improvement and not all pupils reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Actions taken by new and existing leaders to improve the quality of teaching have not been in place long enough to bridge gaps in pupils' previous learning. Consequently, teaching requires improvement.
- When teachers mark pupils' work, they do not always provide pupils with sufficient information about how to improve. They do not always check pupils' work to ensure improvements are accomplished quickly.
- Pupils' below average attainment in national assessments at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 show that achievement is not good enough.
- Pupils' basic writing and numeracy skills are not fully developed and require improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe. This is because strong safeguarding procedures are implemented consistently well by caring staff.
- Children are taught and achieve well in the early years Reception classes.
- There is a welcoming, inclusive atmosphere that underpins the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The wealth of specialist staff expertise and links across the academy trust are helping school leaders to sustain a quickened pace of improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors attended three assemblies, evaluated learning in 24 lessons, and observed the work of 12 teachers. Half of the lessons seen were joint observations with the headteacher and assistant headteacher.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including systems for checking progress, records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures, and the school’s analysis of how well it is doing and how it plans to improve. Records of checks on the quality of teaching were discussed with school and academy trust leaders. Inspectors also examined the school’s work in updating procedures for checking pupils’ progress.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their work. Individual pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to the inspectors. Older pupils were observed reading during class lessons. Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils’ work across a range of subjects and classes, especially writing.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body and representatives of the academy trust, school staff and groups of pupils, including members of the school council. Inspectors spoke to individual pupils in lessons and around the school.
- The inspectors took account of the views expressed in the 43 online responses to Parent View and held informal meetings with parents during the inspection. Inspectors also examined two letters from parents and the lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a parent. Questionnaires from 45 members of staff were also analysed.

Inspection team

Alexander Baxter, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sarah O'Donnell	Additional Inspector
Simon Green	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Churchfield Church School converted to become an academy on 1 April 2013. When its predecessor school, Churchfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be a school causing concern and was placed in special measures.
- The school is a member of the Bath and Wells Multi-Academy Trust. There are nine primary schools in the trust.
- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils) is above average.
- A few pupils attend off-site alternative provision funded by the school.
- Children in the early years provision are admitted on a full-time basis and are accommodated in three Reception classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school has experienced changes in teaching and leadership staff since joining an academy trust.
- A Children's Centre and a Nursery are based adjacent to the school. As they are not managed by the school, they are not included in this inspection.
- The school's breakfast club was included in this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching and learning and pupils' progress are consistently good or better by making sure that:
 - all teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour
 - work is set at the right level so that all pupils are fully challenged and achieve well
 - teachers' marking helps pupils to have a better understanding of how to improve and how to do this as quickly as possible.
- Raise attainment, sustain good progress and develop basic skills in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
 - increasing the emphasis placed on improving pupils' handwriting and their fluency and confidence in writing
 - strengthening pupils' quick and accurate recall of basic number facts and so increase their calculation and problem solving skills.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders at all levels, including those new to their roles, work closely together to strengthen their impact on improving teaching and quickening pupils' progress
 - improving communication with staff and with parents to secure a united community that fully shares and contributes to the continued improvement of the school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders have not yet secured good teaching and learning across the school. Attainment at the end of both key stages has been persistently below average.
- Since it became an academy, the school has continued to experience much change in staffing. This includes all levels of leadership. For a time, this has limited the school's ability to bring about the rapid improvement needed to overcome past weaknesses in leadership, teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Over the last year, leadership has been strengthened by recent appointments and with help from colleagues from the academy trust. This has significantly quickened the pace of improvement. New teachers, improving stability in staffing and professional relationships are revitalising the commitment to re-establish a culture in which good teaching and behaviour can flourish.
- Leaders and managers acknowledge, however, that the period of uncertainty and change has weakened the confidence of some staff and parents. Improving communication through regular meetings is now bringing the school community together.
- The improved school website meets statutory requirements and is more informative than in the past. However, efforts to restore high staff morale and to fully engage with all parents in sharing the vision for the future development of the school have not yet been secured.
- Leaders make sure that the school is safe and secure. They make sure that safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory requirements and are used effectively. For example, risk assessments are drawn up in great detail to keep pupils safe during trips out of school.
- Leaders have re-structured the way they manage teachers' performance, as a result of advice from academy trust colleagues. Leaders now have an accurate view of what works well and what remains to be improved. For example, they have identified that more regular and improved checks of pupils' progress are bringing improvement. However, they know that these checks have not been in place long enough to secure effective teaching and learning in all parts of the school.
- Some middle leaders are still developing their own skills in order to work more closely and effectively with senior leaders to drive improvements. Consequently, the full influence of their work in improving teaching and achievement is not yet evident in all classes.
- The work of the academy trust is having a good impact on the school, especially in raising standards. School and academy trust leaders sustain a strong emphasis on checking school effectiveness and show the capacity to improve further.
- The curriculum has good breadth and balance and includes an effective emphasis on English and mathematics. Although improving, pupils' basic writing and number skills are not always taught well enough. The curriculum includes a wide range of activities and themes that enthuse the pupils. For example, during the inspection, pupils explored the question, 'I wonder if there is life on other planets?' This captured the pupils' imagination and also provided plentiful opportunities for them to advance their own learning by undertaking research using computers.
- The school uses pupil premium funding well to support disadvantaged pupils. This includes additional teaching and adult support to boost literacy and numeracy skills. It also funds visits to places of educational interest to widen the pupils' experiences.
- Leaders receive regular reports from the staff who accompany pupils attending alternative provision. They check these rigorously to ensure that this support has a positive impact on the pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour.
- The school uses the additional sports funding effectively to provide a wider range of sports to improve pupils' skill levels. Staff have received training from specialist coaches in swimming and gymnastics to improve their teaching. More pupils are taking part in extra clubs and sports such as netball, football and tag rugby after school and during lunch times. This is improving their health, fitness and enjoyment of sport and of school.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils, including the very youngest children in Reception, draw up class rules and this helps develop their social and moral awareness.
- Pupils' involvement in elections, for example, to the school council, and in deciding their own question about the space topic, helps to develop their understanding of democracy. Assembly themes and events such as 'Arts Week', during which pupils welcomed visitors from China and made a papier mâché dragon, extend the pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness.
- The strong emphasis placed on the school's values, which promote respect and tolerance of other people,

also promotes British values and prepares them effectively for life in modern Britain.

- Staff demonstrate equality of opportunity for all through the value they place on all pupils' efforts. Staff diligently counter discrimination. For example, pupils with complex emotional needs are fully included in all that the school has to offer.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The school benefits from the support of an effective governing body that is playing an increasingly positive role in driving improvement. Strengthened by representatives from the academy trust, governors have improved the way that they check the quality of their own work and that of the school. Governors engage in regular training. They make good use of the wider skills now available across the academy trust to enhance their impact on the school's performance. Governors have enlisted the help of specialists from a national leadership school in checking and improving the quality of leadership and teaching across the school. Consequently, they know that pupils' attainment and progress, although improving, do not yet compare well with pupils' performance nationally. Governors visit the school regularly to collect first-hand information on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. They know that targets given to teachers to improve their performance are linked with their pay and the impact they have on improving pupils' progress. Governors meet their statutory requirements, including those relating to child protection and safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Several pupils need and receive guidance from adults to act sensibly at lunch and break times and during assemblies. At times, some teachers fail to enthuse pupils or sustain high enough expectations of pupils' behaviour for learning. As a result, some pupils lose interest too easily and their progress is limited.
- Although some staff and parents describe improvement in pupils' behaviour, others express the view that it is still not good enough.
- Pupils express more positive views about improved behaviour and this is also reflected in school records, which show the number of incidents are reducing significantly. For example, pupils say that the school's 'PRAISE' values are 'helping to make a better school and better learning for all people.'
- School records show that staff provide effective and sensitive pastoral support to pupils who experience difficulty in managing their behaviour. The small number of pupils who experience learning in alternative provision also receive the support that they need to help to improve their behaviour.
- Most pupils relate well to the school community. This includes those who attend the breakfast club, where they enjoy a friendly start to the school day. Inspection evidence confirms the school's view that most classrooms have a calm welcoming atmosphere where the large majority of pupils show positive attitudes to learning. This is increasingly reflected in the careful way pupils set out their work in books.
- Pupils work supportively with each other in class. They enjoy discussing ideas and helping each other to learn. Pupils also undertake a range of responsibilities diligently, for example, as members of the school council. They appreciate how the school's values are helping them to make and keep friendships.
- Pupils' attendance is steadily improving, matches the national average and reflects the pupils' positive enjoyment of school. Leaders and administrative and support staff work well with parents and outside agencies. They use rewards and sanctions effectively to promote the importance of regular attendance.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- School buildings and facilities are well maintained and health and safety checks are completed regularly and thoroughly by staff and governors.
- Procedures to safeguard pupils, including vetting of staff and assessments of risks associated with visits out of school, are fully implemented by staff to keep pupils safe.
- As a result, pupils say that they feel safe. They know that a very small number of pupils have emotional needs and behave inappropriately at times, but understand why staff are swift to assist them.
- Staff also provide good care for the few pupils attending alternative provision. Detailed reports and checks of procedures and of the pupils' behaviour ensure that they are kept safe and secure.
- Pupils know about the different forms that bullying might take. They appreciate how teachers help them to keep them safe by talking to them in class and during assemblies.
- Pupils talk knowledgeably about cyber-bullying and racism. They make reference to the guidance and school rules on display in all the classrooms. They say that bullying does happen, but not very often.

Pupils know that bullying is not tolerated and is quickly sorted out by staff should it occur in school.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because over time it has not enabled pupils to progress and achieve well enough. Although strengthened leadership is rapidly improving the quality of teaching, it is not yet consistently good enough in all classes.
- Teachers are increasingly managing pupils' behaviour more effectively and encouraging them to do better during thought-provoking learning activities. However, observations of pupils' responses in lessons and a scrutiny of their work in books show that this is not yet the norm in all classes.
- Teachers are not always setting high enough expectations and levels of challenge for pupils. As a result, gaps in basic literacy and numeracy skills, and weaker attitudes to learning shown by some pupils limit the progress that they make.
- Teachers are also improving the way they work with teaching assistants to make sure that learning activities and the level of adult support are relevant to the pupils' needs. Teaching assistants provide good support to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Disadvantaged pupils are well supported by staff. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure the guidance that they give to these pupils helps them to catch up with their classmates.
- The teaching of reading, especially of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is much improved. Children in the early years and pupils in Key Stage 1 are confident and show an interest in learning to read. Through the school, pupils who find reading more difficult are also rapidly improving their ability to read by using their phonics knowledge to tackle unfamiliar words. The most able pupils also make better progress and increase their skills in reading by using handheld computers to research themes such as 'The Vikings.'
- The teaching of writing is also improving and is quickening pupils' progress. Spelling has become more accurate with a better understanding of phonics. Teachers give pupils clear guidance on how to write descriptively and with imagination. Inspectors saw a good example of this in the way Year 3 pupils wrote a poem about Mercury.
- Pupils' handwriting skills are not being developed well. Guidance from teachers is not always focused on ensuring that pupils form and join letters accurately or write fluently and legibly. At times, this is reducing the pupils' confidence in fully expressing their ideas when writing at length.
- Teaching and particularly questioning pupils in mathematics is also improving. Teachers are checking for any gaps in pupils' understanding more frequently. They use this information to plan learning activities that will close these gaps. For example, during mathematics in Year 5, the pupils clearly extended their understanding of how to find the difference between various numbers when responding to the teachers' probing questions.
- However, teachers do not always develop pupils' ability to recall number facts quickly. This is limiting pupils' confidence in applying skills and extending mathematical understanding to solve problems.
- Teachers are improving the way they mark pupils' work. They give pupils praise for what they have done well to promote their confidence. Teachers are also giving better guidance about what needs to be corrected. At times, teachers do not give the pupils enough information about what to do next in order to improve or check that they do so quickly enough. This slows the progress pupils make.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because over time, pupils have not made consistently good progress across Key Stages 1 and 2. As a result, in the 2014 national tests, attainment at the end of Year 6 was below average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- School records and work in pupils' books show that since September 2014, strengthened leadership and teaching in the school and from academy trust colleagues has improved progress in the early years and Key Stage 1. This academic year, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are reaching levels of attainment that are closer to those typical for their age. However, progress still fluctuates through Key Stage 2.
- In recent terms, improved teaching of phonics, especially in Reception and Years 1 and 2 classes, has raised pupils' performance in the phonics screening checks. Staff are making closer links with parents to enlist their support in helping pupils with reading at home. Teachers are also providing more opportunities and extra help for pupils to read and enjoy books at school to further improve pupils' reading skills.
- Checks on pupils' work in English and mathematics reflect recent improvement, but still show weaknesses

in basic literacy and numeracy skills stemming from previous gaps in learning. Pupils' responses and current work in most classes show a positive improvement.

- Work in books shows that expectations of the progress pupils can make are not always high enough. At times, pupils' lack of handwriting skills limits their progress in writing. Pupils' lack of ability to recall basic number facts quickly and accurately also limits their capacity to solve problems.
- Over time, the progress made by the most able pupils requires improvement. This is because the work set for these pupils is sometimes too easy to enable them to make rapid progress as they move through the school. In response to strengthened teaching, an increasing and closer to average proportion of pupils are now expected to attain the higher National Curriculum Level 5 and Level 6 standards at the end of Year 6 this year.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are also developing their skills more quickly. This is in response to early and appropriately targeted support from teachers and teaching assistants. They make at least the progress that they should given their various starting points.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision grow in self-confidence and improve their ability to learn alongside other pupils. This enables them to concentrate better and increasingly make the progress typically expected when they return to their classes in the school.
- In common with other pupils, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils still requires improvement. In national assessments in 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 was similar to that of their classmates in reading and writing and was the equivalent of about one term's progress behind in mathematics. Their attainment was about two terms behind other pupils nationally. School and inspection evidence show that earlier and more effective adult support is now helping these pupils to make faster progress. Consequently, most gaps between their attainments compared with those of their peers across the different year groups are being steadily closed.

The early years provision

is good

- Children start Reception s with levels of skill and knowledge that are below those typical for their age in most areas of learning. However, this varies from year to year and children's skills are sometimes even less developed in speech and communication.
- A majority of the children reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year and are well prepared to start Year 1. Although standards are still below average overall, this represents good achievement by the children from their differing starting points.
- Children make rapid progress in the Reception classes because effective leadership and management ensure that teaching is consistently good. Leaders of the early years provision are well represented within the school's senior leadership team and this ensures that this key stage is developed effectively.
- All staff promote strong links with parents, which assist in settling children confidently into full-time schooling. Close links with the adjacent nursery also help children to make a successful start.
- Teachers and teaching assistants across the three Reception classes meet frequently to plan relevant learning activities. They share findings of their detailed observations of children's progress to ensure that teaching and activities capture children's interest and help them to build on what they learn.
- All staff set high expectations and sustain well-established routines to secure children's good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Staff provide good quality care and ensure that children are kept safe.
- Good teaching sustains a successful emphasis on developing the children's speaking, reading and writing skills. Adults are careful to identify and demonstrate correct letter sounds when talking with children. This continues throughout all areas of learning, as in mathematics, for example, when counting 'the number of frogs on each lily pad.'
- Although children are provided with readily available materials to develop their writing when learning indoors, outdoor activities are not always used to such good effect in extending these skills.
- Staff question children carefully and draw out and extend their ideas. Adults value the children's contributions and this enthuses them to share ideas freely amongst each other. As a result, children enjoy learning. They continue to find things out together, even when adults are busy helping other children. For example, children concentrate when riding large wheeled toys, and sing out, 'I have speedy wheels.' They also talk happily as they make their pretend aliens out of modelling material.

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	139278
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	449884

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	429
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ray Stewart
Headteacher	Wendy Nelder
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01278 782743
Fax number	N/A
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