

# Churchfield Church School

Burnham Road, Highbridge, Somerset TA9 3JF

## Inspection dates

14–15 November 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Instability in leadership has meant that improvements to the school have not had a consistently good impact for all pupils. As a result, pupils have not made good enough progress across key stage 2. Too few reach the standards expected in mathematics and reading.
- Teaching is not consistently good. Leaders have not yet embedded improvements to practice put in place over the past year.
- Not all teachers use assessment information well to plan lessons. In particular, there is a lack of challenge for the most able in mathematics.
- The teaching of comprehension skills and grammar in English lessons is not developing pupils' skills strongly enough in Years 5 and 6.
- Teachers do not always use the plans and targets for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities when planning class work. The work is sometimes too hard.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is improving as a result of the new plans for spending the pupil premium, but leaders and governors lack a precise picture of what is having the most impact.
- Leaders do not yet have a clear and current picture of how teaching needs to improve. As a result, the school's plan for its development is not sharp enough.
- Pupils do not take the same care in presenting work in their topic books as they do in other subjects.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils made good progress last year as a result of improvements to teaching. The interim headteacher from last year is supporting the new headteacher effectively, to sustain improvement.
- Children get off to a good start in their education in the Reception classes. They make strong progress. Standards have risen year on year and are now in line with national levels.
- Pupils make good progress over key stage 1 and standards have been above national levels for the last two years.
- Pupils behave well in class and in the playground. They are proud of their school.
- Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding know the community well. They work skilfully with other services to protect pupils from harm.

## Full report

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

- Improve the impact of leadership by:
  - ensuring that consistently good teaching is brought about quickly through sharply planned professional development
  - strengthening the drive for improvement through the school development plan
  - evaluating the provision in the new pupil premium strategy, so that further improvements to the achievement of disadvantaged pupils are brought about quickly.
- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' learning and secure pupils' good progress by:
  - teachers using assessment information well to plan lessons which deepen the learning of all pupils, including the most able and those who have SEN and/or disabilities
  - teaching skills of reading comprehension and the use of grammar and punctuation effectively
  - teachers providing pupils with more opportunities to apply their knowledge of calculation and develop their mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Improve pupils' personal development, including attitudes to learning, by:
  - all staff setting consistently high expectations of pupils' concentration and presentation of work
  - building pupils' resilience and confidence to show what they can do in all circumstances.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders have not yet brought about consistently good improvement in pupils' achievement across all parts of the school. The school has experienced significant changes in leadership since the previous inspection in 2015. In 2016, governors and the directors of the multi-academy trust appointed a skilled and experienced interim headteacher to lead the school. The current, experienced headteacher and deputy headteacher, appointed to continue the improvements made, have been in post for only a matter of weeks.
- Leaders have not yet embedded the improvements to teaching which were made last year. They eradicated weak teaching but this led to a lack of continuity to teaching in some classes. Over time this has had an adverse impact on the achievement of pupils in the current Years 5 and 6. Last year, professional development strengthened teaching and led to all year groups making faster progress. There have been further staff changes this year and the improvements from last year still need to be strengthened and consolidated.
- Current leaders' checks on teaching do not highlight sufficiently clearly which aspects of good teaching still need to be embedded. The school's plans for improvement identify the right priorities but do not precisely set out how pupils' achievement will be hastened. The previous headteacher and the current headteacher are continuing to work together in order to maintain the momentum of improvement.
- Leaders have evaluated the spending of the pupil premium for disadvantaged pupils, but have not identified precisely enough where it was having the most impact. Accurate evaluation may be more easily achieved in future because the school has produced a new strategy document and a pupil premium champion has been appointed. Overall, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils across the school improved last year, but was weak for these pupils at the end of key stage 2.
- Leaders allocate the funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities well and the provision for pupils with complex needs is very effective. Recently, the provision for pupils with social and emotional needs has been strengthened and this has reduced the need for exclusion. Leaders plan effective programmes to help pupils catch up. In class, however, some pupils find the work too hard because the plans written for them are not well used.
- Improved leadership last year raised the morale of staff and the confidence of parents. New leaders have already built good relationships with staff, parents and pupils. Parents spoken to value the fact that leaders are accessible and tackle concerns quickly. Pupils are confident that the school is improving. As one said, echoing the views of others, 'The school is a much better place now. It's getting better all the time.'
- Middle leadership has developed well and now middle leaders hold a clear view of the picture of achievement and teaching in their subject. They work well as a team with the leader for assessment, monitoring pupils' work and supporting teachers new to the school. The clearest impact of their work over last year could be seen in improvements in key stage 1 and in improved teaching and standards in writing across the school. They work closely with other leaders in the trust and keep up to date in their own

subject knowledge.

- The curriculum meets national requirements and is increasingly rich in the experiences pupils are offered. Pupils value the study of mindfulness to support their well-being. Singing is taught well and the school is proud of the achievements of the large school choir. Topics are focused on areas of local interest in order to foster a pride in pupils' own community. For example, Year 1 learn through a topic of Carnival and Year 6 explore the geography of Cheddar Gorge. The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The school's Christian values accord well with fundamental British values. Recently, the school put democracy into practice in the election of its first head boy and head girl. Leaders show their commitment to equality of opportunity through key aspects of their work, in particular the commitment to safeguarding and the work to improve pupils' development and skills before they start school. However, because not all pupils experience the same consistently good teaching, this aim has not been fully realised.
- The primary physical education and sport funding is well accounted for and is enabling pupils to take part in a wider range of sports and local competitions. It is extending opportunities for all pupils to learn to swim. Pupils value the opportunities to take part in sport and out-of-school clubs are well attended. Parents spoke positively about this aspect of the school's work.
- The multi-academy trust has given the school good support through the work of the interim headteacher, who now has an advisory capacity. The trust continues to support the development of wider leadership effectively.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors work effectively with staff and leaders and are taking the steps needed to bring the school through a period of change and improvement.
- Governors' monitoring of pupils' achievement identified the need to clarify the effectiveness of different strategies being used to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils. They have set about implementing a new, stronger strategy for the use of the pupil premium. Governors know that this is too recent to have had a proven impact.
- The changes and improvements to governance are relatively recent, but already are supporting and challenging leaders to bring improvements about quickly. Governors now monitor the work of the school closely and, as a result, their challenge is pertinent and purposeful. For example, following the 2017 results at the end of key stage 2, governors challenged leaders about the gap between teachers' assessments and test outcomes. They scrutinised results, pupils' work and sample papers. As a result, they identified the need to improve the curriculum for Year 6 and to build pupils' resilience.
- Records of monitoring visits to the school show that all governors participate regularly at this level. They use the outcomes of monitoring to support their understanding of performance management and to check that it is carried out sufficiently rigorously.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders promote the well-being of vulnerable pupils and families as an integral part of their work. They know the community well and work closely with other voluntary agencies and statutory services. Leaders ensure that pupils who may be at risk of harm are given the maximum protection. As a result, the school is increasingly seen as a lead agency for coordinating support for families.
- The number of vulnerable pupils in the school is unusually high and therefore the work to safeguard them is a daily part of the leaders' role. The team of senior leaders, administrators and pastoral workers, all of whom have multi-agency training, ensures that all referrals are carried out in a timely manner. Record-keeping and communication are of a high standard.
- The culture of safeguarding is well embedded. All staff are regularly trained and are confident to refer, recognising how their role enables them to be vigilant for signs that pupils may be at risk.
- The school's policies and procedures, including those for recruiting staff, are rigorous. Checks are carried out on volunteers as well as staff to ensure that all adults working with pupils are safe to do so. Governors make monthly checks on safeguarding procedures and site safety. The records of these visits guide leaders on how the work could improve further.
- Pupils overwhelmingly feel safe in school and trust their teachers. They are given regular teaching about the importance of staying safe online and parents are given guidance on this as well. Broadly, parents are confident that their children are safe in school. The robust action which the school now takes in response to any possible bullying is well understood by pupils, but currently less so by some parents.

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

### **Requires improvement**

- Teaching is not consistently good. It is too variable across different classes and year groups. This has been the picture over time, despite recent improvements. There have been further staff changes this year and the best practice in teaching has still to embed.
- Teachers do not use assessment well enough when planning their lessons. Teachers have access to extensive information about what pupils know and can do. They check pupils' work in line with the school's policy. However, they do not use this information sharply enough to plan work which moves pupils on quickly.
- The teaching of reading in upper key stage 2 is not building pupils' stamina and skills of comprehension sufficiently quickly for them securely to reach the expectations of the new curriculum. Pupils read regularly and answer questions about their personal reading. However, pupils' workbooks show that teachers are not systematically teaching comprehension skills at the expected level.
- Not all pupils are given regular practice in applying their mathematical thinking and problem-solving skills. Again, the picture is variable and there are examples of good practice in this aspect of teaching, but, across key stage 2, practice is inconsistent. This limits the progress made by the most able pupils in particular. Last year, the teaching

of calculation improved and this aspect of mathematics continues to be well taught.

- The improvements to the teaching of writing made last year have been maintained. However, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are not demonstrating the higher standard for the end of key stage 2, because of errors in their use of punctuation and grammar. Teachers identify pupils' errors through marking but, currently, teaching is not overcoming these gaps in pupils' skills.
- In some classes, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities had work set for them which was too challenging. The work did not build on the new skills which pupils were acquiring in their special programmes. However, where pupils had more complex needs that required an individual programme, they were particularly well taught and supported in their learning.
- Phonics is well taught now and pupils in Year 1 are able to apply their phonic skills in reading and writing.
- Teachers give pupils regular feedback on their work and pupils respond to this by making the changes and improvements they are asked to do. They review the work of their classmates and their comments to each other show that they are keen to improve.
- Over time, teaching in key stage 1 has developed pupils' skills well. The impact of this more consistent programme of teaching can be seen in the work in current Years 3 and 4. Pupils' writing does not show the weaknesses seen in pupils' work further up the school. Their mathematics books show they are more confident to tackle problems and apply their mathematical thinking.
- Pupils are taught science and the humanities effectively, in ways which stimulate their interest. Year 6 pupils were seen building a game from electrical components, devising their own switches and lights. They worked together and cooperated well, discussing their plans and progress. A homework programme about the Romans stimulated pupils in Year 4 to make complex and detailed models of aspects of Roman life.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Not all teachers have high enough expectations of pupils' presentation of work in topic books. As a result, pupils do not show the pride in their work that they could.
- Some pupils lack the ability to sustain concentration for lengthy tasks. Teachers are not building pupils' stamina and resilience as learners sufficiently well. Leaders acknowledge that pupils' lack of stamina disadvantaged them in the end of key stage 2 tests.
- Overall, however, pupils are proud of their school and recognise the improvements that have taken place recently. They are particularly positive about the way achievements are recognised and they eagerly contribute towards the house point system. They value 'praise points' and feel that rewards are fair.

- Pupils collaborate on tasks very well, sharing and using equipment sensibly and fairly. They discuss their learning animatedly and make good use of the frequent opportunities they are given to work together.
- A large number of pupils take part in the school choir. The choir's participation in community events raises pupils' confidence and aspirations. Pupils' participation in all after-school clubs is high. Parents appreciate the opportunities which their children are given.
- Attendance last year was still below the national average. Current attendance rates show an improving picture including for the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. The school has markedly reduced persistent absence. There are still pupils whose attendance needs to improve. However, the school's balance of support and challenge to families is having a good effect.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school is orderly and calm and pupils move around freely and independently. For example, at the end of play they come into the building without lining up and they do so in a sensible fashion. Pupils going upstairs form a safe line and quickly return to classrooms.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils are courteous to adults and keen to learn. In lessons, pupils listen to the teacher and promptly settle to their tasks.
- Pupils say other pupils are friendly and that bullying only happens rarely. They know how to get help from an adult and feel that any concerns they have are dealt with quickly. They understand the school's systems for managing behaviour and believe that sanctions, such as the 'duty room', are fair.
- Pupils enjoy playtime and the level of supervision is just right, allowing pupils to play energetically together, climb and enjoy the equipment provided for them. Staff are, however, vigilant and, if there is any pupil upset, they intervene quickly.
- During the inspection, a small number of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities displayed challenging behaviour which was swiftly and effectively managed without any impact on other pupils' learning. It is rare now for pupils to be excluded from school, as there is extensive pastoral support available to them.
- Not all parents believe yet that pupils behave well. The behaviour of a small number of pupils, on occasion, causes concern to some members of staff. Leaders have planned further training for all staff on ways to de-escalate challenging behaviour.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- As a result of inconsistent teaching, there has been variability in progress over time across key stage 2. This has meant that pupils have not made the progress that they should. Attainment and progress at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 in reading and mathematics were low in relation to national levels. Progress in writing was much stronger. The picture was similar for disadvantaged pupils and for the most able.
- The impact of this variability in progress over the key stage can currently be seen at



the end of key stage 2. For pupils in upper key stage 2, there is still a legacy of underachievement to overcome. Last year, the school's assessment processes show that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, made accelerated progress as a result of the improvements to teaching. However, not all of the gains that pupils made fully embedded their skills of grammar and punctuation, for example, or their ability to apply their calculation skills. These shortcomings are currently limiting the achievement of the most able pupils in that part of the school.

- This legacy was seen in the below-average outcomes in the reading test at the end of key stage 2 this year. Pupils lacked the stamina to read complex texts and respond at the expected level. Currently, pupils' workbooks show that they still cannot confidently tackle the level of questioning which is now expected.
- Pupils are, however, keen readers, including pupils in upper key stage 2. The school's programme for encouraging pupils to read widely is building a culture of reading for pleasure. Pupils are expected to record their understanding of their reading and, depending upon the score they achieve in the quiz, move quickly on to a new book. They do this with enthusiasm.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not always make the progress that they are capable of in class lessons. However, they do make that progress in the special programmes to help them catch up. Pupils who have complex special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in their well-planned individual programmes of learning.
- Currently, pupils in Year 1 have good phonic skills and are working already well within the expectations for the end of year. Pupils in Year 2 are continuing to make good progress with more complex phonic patterns and, at the same time, are adapting well to the programme for spelling challenging and irregular words. Overall, the impact of the school's work to improve spelling can be seen across the school.
- Pupils make good progress across key stage 1, building on the improved attainment when children leave the Reception classes. As a result, for the past two years, attainment has been above national levels in reading, writing and mathematics. The attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 have also been strengthened.
- Pupils' increasingly good progress is continuing more consistently now into Years 3 and 4. For example, pupils' workbooks show that they are building strongly on their earlier achievements, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils gain skills and knowledge in science, the humanities and the arts. They can discuss their learning well. They display their knowledge more strongly in whole-class projects than in the day-to-day work in their books.
- Pupils at the end of their Reception year and at the end of key stage 1 are prepared well to move to the next stage of their education. This is not the case for pupils at the end of key stage 2, however, where too few currently transfer with the expected skills for their age.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- Children make strong progress across their time in the Reception classes. Standards



have risen consistently since the previous inspection. This year, the proportion of children that reached a good level of development was in line with national levels. Children are now well prepared to start their next stage of education in Year 1.

- When they start school, many children have skills and knowledge below and sometimes well below those usually found. This is particularly the case in skills of speaking and listening. The school now manages the on-site Nursery and the early years leader leads both settings effectively. She has used this opportunity skilfully and strategically to ensure that children are better prepared when they start school. As a result, children's language skills and confidence are improving year on year. This strategy has particularly supported the good achievement of disadvantaged children.
- Leaders and teachers use assessment information well to plan activities which promote learning for all groups of children. The achievement of boys has been a focus because the gap between boys' and girls' attainment has been too wide in the past. Boys are now given engaging opportunities to gain skills of reading and writing through play, particularly outside. For example, they were seen to form their letters through spraying water in letter shapes.
- All staff in the Reception classes promote children's speaking and listening purposefully and effectively in all activities. For example, when playing at 'pirates' children were encouraged to name the parts of the ship they were building. Children could also retell the story of the 'Little Red Hen' using, as a guide, pictures they had drawn themselves.
- Children behave very well in the Reception classes where all staff support their safety and welfare needs effectively in the clean and well-equipped setting. All staff encourage children to be independent in their use of equipment. Routines for tidying up and moving between activities are well established.
- Teachers teach phonics well and children are now beginning to build words to write independently, using their phonic knowledge. This is promoting the achievement of the most able children in particular.
- The early years leader works closely with parents, including through liaising with the on-site children's centre. She uses these opportunities well to support and engage families in their children's learning. When teachers believe that children may have SEN and/or disabilities, for example, help and support are quickly sourced.
- Parents are very happy about their children's positive start to school. As one parent said, echoing the feelings of others, 'My child has never been more happy and is excited about going to school.'

## School details

Unique reference number	139278
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10037072

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	453
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	David Amos
Headteacher	Justin Philcox
Telephone number	01278 782743
Website	<a href="http://www.churchfieldbwmat.org">www.churchfieldbwmat.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@churchfield.bwmat.org">office@churchfield.bwmat.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	March 2015

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about the content of the curriculum the school follows in each academic year for every subject.
- Churchfield Church School is a two-form entry primary school and is part of the Bath and Wells Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school took on the management of Churchfield Nursery on behalf of the trust in September 2015. The school's early years leader is the Nursery manager. The Nursery was not included as part of this inspection. Children join the school in the Reception classes.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2017. Their leadership follows a period of interim headship by a national leader of education who

had been assigned to the school by the multi-academy trust to strengthen the school's effectiveness.

- The school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2016 and 2017.
- The proportion of pupils who are in receipt of the pupil premium is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is higher than the national average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons, some jointly with senior leaders.
- A wide sample of pupils' work was scrutinised, again some jointly with leaders. The sample included work from last year.
- Meetings were held with the new headteacher and deputy headteacher. Meetings were also held with middle leaders and members of the governing body. Inspectors met with the area improvement officer for the trust. A larger meeting was held with senior officers from the trust and the interim headteacher from last year.
- Inspectors read with pupils from Year 1 and met with a group of pupils from Years 5 and 6 to discuss their reading.
- Inspectors talked to a group of pupils as well as talking to other pupils, informally in lessons and in the playground.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation in relation to safeguarding, the school's evaluation and plans for improvement and external reviews. Assessment information held by the school about pupils' achievement was scrutinised.
- Inspectors took account of the 44 responses to and 19 comments in the online Parent View survey. They also talked to parents at the start of the day and to those attending the school's own parents' evening. The responses to the 45 staff questionnaires were also considered.

## Inspection team

Wendy Marriott, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Shears	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Brown	Ofsted Inspector

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