

# St Stephen's CofE Primary School

Richmond Place, Lansdown, Bath, BA1 5PZ

**Inspection dates** 11–12 March 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils make good progress during their time in St Stephen's. Their attainment has improved since the previous inspection. By the time they leave, the standards they reach are above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most able achieve well. A higher than average proportion of pupils attains the highest levels in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The early years is good. Children in the Reception class are enthusiastic learners. They get on well together and they develop the skills they need to move into Year 1.
- Reading is a strength of the school. Pupils of all ages learn the skills they need to become confident and enthusiastic readers.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They explain clearly and they use questions effectively to probe pupils' thinking and develop their understanding.
- Pupils are well looked after. Consequently, they feel safe and parents and staff are confident that the school is a safe place in which to learn.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is good. In lessons pupils try hard. They are welcoming and polite to each other and all members of the school community.
- Pupils' personal development has a high priority. All pupils are known as individuals to all adults in school. They are treated with respect and they willingly reflect this respect back to others.
- The new headteacher has quickly gained an accurate view of what the school does well and what could be even better. He is well supported by other leaders and governors in making sure that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement is continuing to improve.
- Governors are ambitious for the school. They are fully involved in checking how well things are going. They make sure that the headteacher and other leaders are making the changes necessary to help the school to be even better.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not yet outstanding. Not enough pupils make rapid progress from their starting points.
- The comments teachers write when they mark pupils' work do not always give clear enough advice about how to improve, especially in mathematics.
- Teachers do not always check pupils' understanding sufficiently during lessons. As a result, they are not always well placed to adjust their teaching to help pupils to make the best possible progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 21 lessons and parts of lessons, some of them jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, other leaders in school, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, an education adviser employed by the school, and with parents and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 113 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the views of parents from informal discussions in school. They also considered information in four letters received during the inspection.
- Inspectors considered school leaders' views on the quality of the school's work and their plans for school improvement, as well as information about pupils' progress. They also looked at teachers' planning, pupils' work, documentation about safeguarding procedures and examples of the targets teachers receive to improve their performance.
- The inspection team analysed the 28 questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Jeanne Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

David Westall

Additional inspector

Richard Lucas

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Stephen's Church of England Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The headteacher started at the school in September 2014.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding (provided for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority) is lower than average.
- Most of the pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is in line with the national average.
- Children in the Reception classes all attend full time.
- The school runs a breakfast club, which is managed by the governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding so pupils make consistently rapid progress by:
  - making sure that the advice teachers give to pupils when they mark their work always helps them to know how they can improve, especially in mathematics
  - making sure that teachers regularly check on how well pupils understand new learning so that they can adjust their teaching to provide extra support or extra challenge when needed.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher has quickly gained the confidence of the school community. He has worked effectively with other leaders and managers in school, and with governors, to find out where the school is most successful and where things could be even better. The carefully planned changes that the headteacher and other leaders are making are building on the strengths and helping other aspects to improve.
- All leaders and managers, including governors, have high ambitions for the school. They have worked together, and with parents and pupils, to develop a shared idea of their aims for the school. 'Being the best we can be' is now driving all the school is doing. This includes staff, who welcome the training they have had and the way in which the headteacher is helping them all to develop their skills. As a result, good teaching and behaviour are evident in the everyday life of the school.
- Parents are very pleased with the education their children receive. Nearly all those who responded on Parent View would recommend the school to others.
- Teachers who lead subjects know their areas well. They check regularly on both the quality of teaching and the quality of the work in pupils' books. They share their own highly developed skills to help everyone to improve.
- The wide range of visits and visitors that the pupils enjoy is used as an effective springboard for stimulating work across all the subjects pupils learn. During the inspection, for example, pupils in Key Stage 1 visited the Georgian House. The discussion stimulated by the visit and the reports pupils wrote brought learning alive.
- Pupils say that they find lessons interesting. Subjects are linked together whenever possible, so that pupils get a wider understanding of the topics they are studying. Pupils practise their skills in reading, writing and mathematics to help them research and record their learning. This contributes strongly to the good progress they make.
- The school makes sure that pupils understand life in modern Britain. The school council gives pupils a strong voice for change and helps them to understand the democratic process. It also helps them understand the importance of considering the views of others when they make decisions, including views which may be different from their own.
- Pupils learn a wide range of musical instruments and they can join the choir, the orchestra and the music club. The special experiences pupils have on 'Wonderful Wednesdays' are particularly effective in helping them develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. This is reflected in the positive attitudes, relationships and behaviour shown consistently by most pupils.
- The school has made good use of the additional funding for sport. Specialist coaches have helped teachers to develop their skills and to provide a much wider range of sports for the pupils, including at lunchtimes. More than 300 pupils have taken part in competitive and non-competitive sports activities, both at local and regional level. Pupils' standards in sport have improved, including those who have a particular talent. Pupils have a greater understanding of how taking part in activities helps them to develop a healthy lifestyle and to stay healthy in later life.
- There are no significant gaps in the attainment of any groups of pupils which demonstrates that the school's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination is effective.
- Additional funding is used effectively to provide support for pupils' academic and emotional needs. Pupils work with adults on their own or in small groups to help them to catch up. Some pupils attend clubs to encourage them to reach higher standards in areas in which they have a particular talent. As a result, the gaps in their attainment are closing rapidly.
- The school's systems for keeping pupils safe and secure meet statutory requirements. There are detailed records of any concerns about pupils' well-being and the headteacher takes swift and appropriate actions when necessary.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. The headteacher has had appropriate support as part of his induction. The school appropriately receives light touch support.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors recognise that they are now more effective than they have been in the past. They make regular visits to the school and know about the quality of teaching. They ask pupils about how much they enjoy school and how much progress they are making. They consider their findings, together with the helpful and accurate reports they receive from the headteacher and other leaders, to provide high levels of challenge. They use information about achievement to compare St Stephen's with how well

other schools are doing. They know that there are no groups of pupils who are underachieving, including those who are disadvantaged. They know that underperformance is tackled and that effective teachers are rewarded by progression through the pay scales. They use their skills wisely to support the school and they attend training to develop their skills even more. They share the headteacher's ambition to make sure that the school is effective as it can be.

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

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite to each other and to adults. They work and play together amicably. The oldest pupils love organising activities and clubs for the younger pupils.
- Pupils have a good start to the day in breakfast club. There are many interesting things for them to do. At the end of the session they clear up sensibly, helping each other and cooperating without being asked.
- Relationships at all levels are strong. Pupils know that the staff care about them. They say that all adults listen and help them if they are worried about anything.
- Adults model respect and politeness which the pupils willingly reflect back. As a result, pupils are confident to make mistakes, which benefits their motivation and achievement. During the inspection, the youngest pupils explained that it was fine to make a mistake because that was how they could learn.
- Pupils respect each other's views. They say that they enjoy working together in lessons. They are proud of being pupils at St Stephen's. Pupils take care of their school and they usually show pride in the presentation of their work.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons and try hard, regardless of who is teaching them. Occasionally some time is lost if pupils' attention wanes when tasks are not well matched to their needs. However, pupils usually respond quickly when teachers remind them about expectations.
- Pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour have good support to make the right choices. There are very few incidents of poor behaviour recorded by the school. If incidents occur, the headteacher or other leaders always check to make sure that things have been resolved.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare. They have recently spent time learning about all kinds of bullying, so they know the difference between bullying and rough play or accidents. They are confident that adults would deal with anything that arose.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All pupils, parents and staff think that the school is a safe place in which to learn.
- The school acts swiftly if it becomes apparent that there are areas of safety which could be improved. For example, pupils and parents have welcomed the recent work to improve the security of the car park.
- Pupils enjoy school, so it is not surprising that attendance is above average. When pupils are absent, the school makes thorough checks that pupils are safe.
- Pupils have sound awareness of the importance of road and fire safety as well as how to keep themselves safe when they are using the internet. The oldest pupils visit the Life Skills Centre so that they are aware of the risks they might meet as they get older.

## **The quality of teaching** is good

- Pupils enjoy their lessons because teachers make learning interesting. Teachers explain new learning clearly. As a result, pupils understand the activities they have to do and very little time is lost.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use to ask questions which probe pupils' understanding and move the learning on. Most teachers use pupils' answers to check that pupils understand the new ideas. Sometimes they do not immediately recognise when the most able are ready to move on more swiftly, or when pupils need extra help. As a result, learning slows for some pupils in a few lessons.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support. They use questions well to help the pupils to take the next steps in their understanding.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because of the extra help they have, both in the classroom and when they work with teaching assistants or visiting teachers on specific programmes of support.
- The pupils say that the new way that teachers are marking their work is helping them to know what they

need to do to get even better. The pupils know that they have to read the teachers' comments and 'mend' what they got wrong or 'grow' the things that could be even better. Most teachers write helpful comments when they respond to pupils' writing. However, this is far less evident in mathematics, which means that pupils sometimes repeat errors.

- Pupils practise and apply their communication, reading, writing and mathematical skills across all the subjects they learn. Reading is a key strength and pupils benefit from skilled teaching of reading throughout their time in school. As pupils get older, they learn the skills they need to read quickly and with understanding. Displays around the school encourage them to develop a love of reading.
- Pupils write regularly and at length. This helps them to develop resilience and fluency. They enjoy writing because teachers are skilful in helping them to learn the skills of punctuation, grammar and spelling that they need. In addition, the topics they write about are relevant and interesting.
- Pupils have good understanding of mathematical calculations and they are increasingly applying their understanding through problem solving and investigations. During the inspection, some older pupils were engrossed in finding out the costs of carpeting and painting rooms with different perimeters and areas. Pupils are used to looking for patterns and sequences in numbers which adds to their interest in the subject.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive a variety of help for their academic and emotional development which meets their needs well. Teachers use information about their achievement to find out where the pupils are having difficulty and the support they receive helps to close the gap between their achievement and that of their classmates.

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well throughout their time at St Stephen's Primary School. All groups of pupils make good progress from their starting points. By the time they leave, the standards pupils reach are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This means that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The most able pupils achieve well. The proportions of pupils attaining the highest levels in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 6 are well above average.
- Pupils love reading. The youngest pupils read well because they understand the sounds that letters make. They read often at home and in school which helps them to practise their skills and make good progress. A higher than average proportion of pupils reaches the expected level in the national reading check at the end of Year 1, and the number is rising each year.
- Achievement is good and not outstanding because, while progress is never less than good and some pupils make rapid progress, this is not always the case.
- Teachers spot quickly any pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, as well as those who are falling behind for other reasons. The effective support they receive means that they make good progress and, by the time they leave, they are about a year ahead of similar pupils nationally. Parents of pupils who receive extra help value the meetings they have with teachers to talk about their children's progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points. Pupils who left the school at the end of Year 6 in 2014 had caught up with their classmates in reading and writing. The gap in mathematics was about two terms, although all pupils made at least expected progress. Compared with national averages, overall the standards they reach are about a term ahead of other pupils nationally. However, numbers are small, so results can vary from year to year.

### The early years provision is good

- Parents say that their children thrive in the Reception classes. They say that the staff got to know their children very quickly. The school encourages parents to accompany their children into the classrooms at the beginning of every day, which has helped the children to settle quickly.
- Overall, children start school with skills that are in line with those typically found for their age, although some are above. Teachers' high expectations help the children to make progress which is at least good across all the areas of their learning. Occasionally, they do not use the information about children's abilities accurately and the activities they organise are too difficult. When this happens, children lose interest and progress slows slightly.
- By the time they move into Year 1, a higher than average proportion reaches a good level of development

so that the children are well prepared for the new experiences they will have. Children who are behind when they start school have effective support which helps them to catch up, particularly those with specific difficulties.

- Children love their learning because the activities are interesting and teachers teach in lively ways. During the inspection, for example, children got involved in the traditional story of *Jack and the Beanstalk* by acting out the story. They were planting seeds and developing their communication skills in the Garden Centre area of the classroom.
- All adults talk to pupils about their learning. They use questions to encourage them to talk about their understanding and practise their language skills. As a result, children make good progress and are confident to share their ideas with adults.
- Teachers make sure that children hold their pencils and form their letters correctly, which establishes good writing habits from the start. Most children are able to write simple sentences, so they are already starting to reach the early learning goals for the end of the year.
- Strong links across different areas of their learning help children to make connections and develop a deeper level of understanding. However, the outdoor learning area is not of the same high quality as indoors. The leader is aware of the need to improve outdoor learning because she has an accurate understanding of the quality of early years provision. Plans are in hand to improve the outdoor area in the near future.
- The classroom is well organised to encourage children to be safe and stay safe. Children behave well, willingly sharing the equipment. Staff make sure that children are well cared for and children learn from this example and care for each other.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	109258
<b>Local authority</b>	Bath and North East Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	453265

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	417
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Judith Palmer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andy Bowman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 April – 2 May 2007
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