

Curry Mallet Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Lower Street, Curry Mallet, Taunton, Somerset, TA3 6TA

Inspection dates 12–13 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils' achievement at the end of Year 6 has been excellent for a number of years.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 in reading and writing over the last few years has been on an upwards trajectory and is now above that seen nationally.
- More able pupils are set harder work, especially in mathematics, so they can achieve the highest levels.
- Teaching has been very effective in motivating and engaging pupils, and has enabled them to make excellent progress from their starting points.
- Pupils say they feel safe and very well looked after.
- Behaviour in the school is excellent and makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' learning.
- Curry Mallet Primary School is very much an inclusive school where there is a determination for all pupils to achieve well.
- The school is very well led by the headteacher who, although new to the role, has a wealth of experience working in the school and has a very good understanding of its strengths and areas that can be developed further.
- The middle leadership team has quickly got to grips with its new role and is already making an impact.
- The governing body is very supportive, yet holds the school to account for the progress of all of the pupils.
- The school's values and beliefs are shared with the pupils and these contribute to pupils' excellent social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- School leaders, including governors, have worked well to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement since the last inspection. They have sustained pupils' high attainment over a number of years and are committed to developing the quality of teaching further.
- Pupils are very well prepared to move on to secondary school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed parts of six lessons and a whole school assembly led by a Christian youth worker.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and other members, as well as with senior and middle leaders. The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and scrutinised samples of pupils' workbooks.
- A wide range of documents was examined, including the school's information on pupils' recent progress, as well as planning and documentation about checks on teaching, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspector also took account of the 30 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), one letter from a parent and the views of staff through the 14 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

David Hogg, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Curry Mallet Primary School is situated in of the village of Curry Mallet. It is much smaller than the average-size primary school. It draws most of its pupils from the village and the nearby village of Beercrocombe, Isle Abbotts and Fivehead.
- The school is organised into three mixed-age classes.
- There are only a few pupils from ethnic backgrounds other than White British attending the school.
- Only a very small number of pupils are supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and those from service families).
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action is a little above the national average.
- There were fewer than 11 Year 6 pupils that took national tests last year, so the school's results are not compared against government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is similar to the national average.
- The headteacher was appointed in January 2014, having been promoted from within the school. Several other recent appointments to the teaching team have also been made, with staff joining at the same time or at the end of the last academic year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the pupils always have clear short term targets that are linked to the tasks they are currently working on.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Overall attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6 has been high for a long period of time and is significantly above the national average. The numbers of pupils in each year can be small, but the school has secured consistency in this high level of attainment for different groups of pupils.
- Pupils' attainment in literacy at the end of Year 2 has improved over time, from being well below national averages to now being above. The school's own data indicate that this will continue to improve further this year.
- The progress pupils make between Year 2 and Year 6 is excellent overall and is especially high in reading and mathematics.
- Children join the school with skills that are typical for their age, but in different years this can vary. The children generally progress well in the individual learning areas and are effectively prepared for learning in Year 1. Recent staff changes in the mixed Reception and Year 1 class have resulted in improvements in the amount of progress the children make, and more accurate assessments of how well the children are doing.
- Reading is well taught in the school, with older pupils reading with fluency and intonation. One pupil was keen to share that she had read 27 books this year. The pupils have a range of favourite authors, both contemporary and more traditional, with Enid Blyton still being enjoyed.
- The school did see a drop last year in the outcomes in the screening check of the pupils' understanding of letter sounds. This was linked to the way the test was administered, which has been addressed. Younger pupils' skills and understanding of letter sounds are now very good. Their reading is good and developing quickly, with pupils able to use their knowledge of the sounds letters make together to read unfamiliar or trickier words.
- Mathematics is well taught across the school and, as a result, pupils' achievement is excellent by the end of Year 6, with pupils' attainment in national assessment tests consistently being well above the national average for a number of years.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress from their individual starting points, compared with others in their classes, and achieve as well. There are a small number of pupils with some very specific needs and they are helped to develop and progress extremely well through very effective one-to-one support within the classroom. The school is inclusive and is determined that all pupils achieve well. The few pupils from ethnic heritages different from the majority achieve as well as their peers.
- In this school the pupil premium is used very well to support individual pupils.
- More able pupils are very effectively challenged with specific work matched to their abilities. For example, some pupils in Year 6 are working on the higher level tasks and work appropriate for secondary school pupils. The school has been able, in the past, to support a number of pupils who have achieved good GCSE grades in mathematics whilst still in Year 6.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The excellent quality of teaching has enabled pupils to achieve highly over a number of years. Pupils say teacher make lessons fun and interesting. From observations during the inspection, the engagement by pupils on the learning activities is high and their enjoyment was clear. One pupil from the Early Years Foundation Stage remarked on how much fun they were having in a mathematics activity in the outdoor area.
- Lessons are very well organised, with well thought out activities that challenge pupils very well, including the most able, and provide a high degree of motivation. Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely together in planning such activities. The quality of planning is particularly strong and takes full account of both the wide age range in classes as well as the range of abilities.
- Children in Reception learn quickly because there is a good blend of well-structured adult-led

tasks supported by interesting activities that pupils can explore for themselves. Older pupils have excellent opportunities to develop their skills through practical activities and apply their understanding. For example, a group of Year 6 pupils were challenged to measure and work out the areas of different parts of a netball court.

- Teaching assistants support the work of the class teacher very effectively. For example, in an English lesson for the mixed Years 2, 3 and 4 class, the teaching assistant led part of the lesson with the majority of pupils which allowed the teacher to focus on developing the understanding of the sounds letters make with a group of Year 2 pupils. Both groups, as a result, made excellent progress. In the mixed Years 5 and 6 class, the teaching assistants were used very effectively to support individuals on a one-to-one basis.
- The progress shown in pupils' books is very good and this is supported by pupils having clear long term targets to refer to. These are regularly reviewed and new ones provided when they have been achieved. This process assists planning and ensures that pupils undertake appropriately challenging work. Pupils are strongly motivated by having these targets to work towards. However, targets for what pupils need to achieve in individual lessons are not always as clear.
- Pupils' work is marked thoroughly and teachers provide pupils with guidance on how they can improve.
- The classrooms are bright and inviting. Pupils' work is of high quality and displayed in the classrooms and around the school. In their books their work is neat and well presented and it is clear pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Consequently, pupils feel very well cared for. Pupils have a good understanding of e-safety and know what to share and not to share on social media sites and when playing games online. They are given opportunities to become proficient on their bicycles through a 'bikeability' course, and have a good understanding of stranger danger.
- The school has very effectively promoted the importance of caring for each other within the school community. Incidents of unkindness are rare and pupils say that, though they may fall out, there is no bullying in school. Pupils care and look after each other very well when in school. Playground buddies help out at break and lunchtime and are there to encourage others to play. Pupils support and help each other as a matter of course, and it was noticed that a number of older pupils gently looked after another pupil with additional needs as they came into assembly.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This contributes very strongly to pupils' learning. Pupils demonstrate a range of skills in class. They are confident to present their ideas in front of the whole class and are able to work collaboratively on activities. They know classroom routines and what is expected of them and follow instructions very carefully. Relationships within school are very good and pupils enjoy working with their teachers. They say that their teachers will 'always try to help them' and are 'very kind'. Behaviour outside of lessons is of an equally high standard.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive and pupils display a real thirst for knowledge and enthusiasm to participate in the wide range of engaging and challenging activities provided. Most subjects pupils say are brilliant and they enjoy the activities in their classes and the opportunities to go and learn out of school, especially the visit to the Caerleon Roman Fortress Museum. The Years 5 and 6 pupils are currently very excited about their next trip to visit a mosque and a temple in Bristol as part of their studies of other faiths.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to involve themselves in sporting activities and competitions. During the inspection, the girls' gymnastics team took part in a local competition and came third against much larger schools and the Years 5 and 6 football and netball teams performed with credit in a local tournament.
- Attendance is above the national average.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school has a sustained track record of high achievement and it has demonstrated strong improvement from the previous inspection. Leadership and management have very effectively created a learning environment where pupils behave very well and are strongly motivated by the high quality teaching they receive.
- The headteacher is new to the role, but having been the senior teacher in school for a number of years has an excellent understanding of the strengths of the school. She has clear and focused plans to develop certain aspects of the school further. She has used support from the local authority well in her first few weeks in her new role.
- The new headteacher has quickly provided middle leaders with greater responsibility for their areas. Although some are very new to the school, they have drawn on prior experience and taken the opportunity provided to review their own areas and begun to make improvements. For example, in Reception, assessments of the children's development have been made more robust and have been moderated rigorously.
- The quality of teaching is monitored very closely. Direct lesson observations made by the headteacher are now supported by digital recording to allow school leaders to review how effective teachers are in their classes. Systems are in place to review the performance of teachers against specific targets, which in turn are linked to teachers' pay and opportunities for promotion. The headteacher is reviewing these targets to ensure they are more closely linked to pupil outcomes.
- Pupils' work is tracked carefully and allows the school to monitor the progress of individuals and, over time, the progress groups of pupils are making. The school moderates pupils' work with other schools to ensure assessments are accurate.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides a wide range of creative and interesting learning opportunities for the pupils. Through the activities provided and the values of the school, the social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding of the pupils has developed very well. The school ensures there is no discrimination and all pupils have the opportunity to achieve as well as they can.
- The school has begun to make good use of the additional primary school sports funding through the use of coaches to work alongside teachers in lessons and to provide high quality coaching in after-school activities. Sport is very popular within school and the participation rates are very good. The school, along with the governors, is currently discussing how it can check how effectively the funding has been used.
- Pupils' welfare and safety are of the highest priority and are ensured with effective child protection and safeguarding procedures that meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has worked very effectively with other leaders and managers to sustain the school's strong record of pupils' high achievement, as well as improvement, from the last inspection. It is increasingly effective in holding the school to account for the progress the pupils make. Governors have a good understanding of performance data. They are regular visitors to the school and have a very good appreciation of the quality of teaching from feedback from the headteacher. In addition, they visit lessons and review the progress made by groups of pupils. For example, the link governor responsible for special educational needs meets with the key member of staff to discuss the progress made by the small number of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding and those with additional needs. The governors have a very clear understanding of how teachers' salary progression is linked to them achieving specific targets. They are aware also of the procedures for tackling underperformance. The financial position of the school is reviewed extremely carefully, as is any specific funding, for example that linked to develop primary sports within the school. The safeguarding arrangements are closely reviewed to ensure they meet statutory requirements so pupils are safe in school.

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	123751
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	439599

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Thornton
Headteacher	Wendy Devereux
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2009
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