

St. Stephen's Infant School

Lansdown Road, Kingswood, Bristol BS15 1XD

Inspection dates

8–9 December 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils across the school are making good progress, especially those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The achievement of pupils in the school since the last inspection, and prior to the introduction of the new curriculum and assessment arrangements, was consistently strong.
- Attendance is improving, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave sensibly around the school site and have positive attitudes to learning.
- Staff have fostered strong, supportive relationships with parents and the local community.
- Some of the most able pupils are not being pushed to achieve the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders do not have a sharp enough grasp of the impact of additional funding on the academic progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders have created a culture in which pupils feel valued and looked after. This is a welcoming, inclusive school.
- Teaching is preparing pupils better for the greater demands of the new national curriculum.
- Provision in the early years is good. Accurate assessment of children's needs and good-quality teaching enable children to make rapid progress.
- Additional funding is used effectively to provide strong pastoral support for disadvantaged pupils, such as improving attendance. It also enables those who need to catch up to make similar progress to their peers.
- Not all staff are fully familiar with the system of assessment the school is using to monitor pupils' progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement by ensuring that:
 - new assessment systems are fully embedded and understood by all staff
 - work meets the needs of the most able pupils so that they make more rapid progress
 - the sharper monitoring of pupil premium funding further boosts pupils' academic progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, since his appointment 10 years ago, has cultivated a school culture that is underpinned by key values. These include tolerance, kindness and respect. As a result, the school is a welcoming, caring place where pupils and their families are valued.
- Leaders know the school well because they have a realistic and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, leaders have been quick to respond to underachievement in 2016. They have taken appropriate action to ensure that current pupils are being well prepared for the new curriculum and more challenging assessments.
- The headteacher has set a 'high bar', so that all staff have high expectations of pupils. Effective work takes place inside and outside of the classroom to help pupils understand the importance of working hard and not giving up. Staff recognise the importance of developing the mental attitudes and temperament necessary for pupils to thrive and meet their potential.
- The leadership of teaching is strong. This is because the management of teachers' performance is linked effectively to clear subject action plans and the progress of pupils. This, in turn, identifies staff training needs, which are well met in school and through the work that takes place with other schools. A robust monitoring and evaluation cycle means that staff are clear about the strengths of their practice and the improvements they need to make.
- Middle leaders are proactive and purposeful in their work. They have taken action to ensure that the curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills securely. For example, mathematics and English action plans clearly describe the work being undertaken to prepare pupils for demanding assessments at the end of Year 2.
- Senior leaders work closely with middle leaders to ensure that the curriculum is fit for purpose. As a result of this good strategic oversight, pupils follow a broad, stimulating, thematically linked curriculum. Furthermore, it is adaptable enough to meet the changing needs of the school. For example, further opportunities to enable pupils to practise their writing skills were recently introduced, such as in computing, where pupils now practise instructional writing.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is well developed. This is because leaders take opportunities to mark religious events, reinforce the values that underpin the school's culture and contribute to community fundraising events. For example, in the school foyer, a rotating presentation on a monitor screen informed pupils about places of worship for different religions.
- Additional funding is used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those who need to catch up make progress that is comparable to their peers. For example, dedicated assistants are successfully moving these pupils on with their reading. Other staff have been employed to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, which is increasing. However, leaders are not fully aware of which strategies are having the

most positive impact on pupils' academic progress.

- Leaders have employed the services of an external adviser to help them spend the sports premium funding to best effect. As a result, pupils now participate more frequently in sporting activities in and out of school. Funding has also enabled staff to become more 'skilled-up' in teaching physical education.
- Leaders receive good support from the local authority and the school improvement adviser. This support has included training for staff and useful strategic guidance for leaders and governors. Notes of visits indicate, however, that challenge in response to underachievement is not always sufficiently rigorous.
- Over time, the headteacher has successfully built up good relationships with parents. They are made to feel welcome because the school takes an 'open door' approach. Workshops are provided for parents so that they can help with their child's learning at home. Sessions might include, for example, phonics and mathematics methods.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, agreed, many strongly so, that the school is well led and managed. As one parent commented, 'I am delighted with the school and would recommend it highly to all.'

Governance of the school

- Governors take their responsibilities seriously and realise the importance of their roles. As a result, they have been quick to discover the reasons for underachievement in 2016 and hold leaders to account. Records of governing body minutes show that governors tackle difficult issues in order to understand how the school might improve. Governors ensure they ask the right questions of leaders by using other available evidence, such as performance data and the views of other professionals. This ensures that governors are able to provide an important level of challenge to the headteacher, as well as support.
- Governors ensure that they are up to date with relevant training, including the government's 'Prevent' duty and safer recruitment. They are kept clearly informed about any safeguarding issues.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school culture supports a robust and consistent approach to safeguarding. Pupils are made aware at a very young age that their actions and choices have consequences. This is because behaviour is well managed in the school and pupils learn the 'golden rules' that encourage them to be kind and responsible. As a result, pupils know what safe behaviour is, so they work and interact with each other sensibly.
- Effective systems are in place to ensure that staff feel able to share concerns and know how to do so. As the headteacher said to the lead inspector, 'We share information religiously at this school.' Safeguarding is frequently an agenda item when different groups of staff meet so that issues can be discussed, if appropriate. Staff, governors and visitors know the procedures to follow should they have concerns. For example, flow-charts on posters around the school clearly highlight the staff to be consulted and

the procedures to follow.

- The relevant checks to ensure that adults are suitable to work with children are in place. All staff have received appropriate training, including a number who have designated safeguarding responsibilities.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils enjoy their learning because teachers use their good subject knowledge and understanding of pupils' interests to plan stimulating activities. Pupils' engagement is further enhanced because of the warm, supportive relationships that exist between staff and pupils.
- Learning environments encourage pupils to see learning as an exciting, fun activity. Throughout classrooms and corridors pupils are met with colourful displays on the walls or interesting objects hanging from ceilings or on shelves. These displays celebrate pupils' work or present learning methods for different subjects in an accessible, eye-catching way.
- Teaching assistants successfully move pupils forward in their learning. This is because they provide the right level of guidance and questioning that prompts pupils to think for themselves. Other adults, such as learning mentors and reading assistants, also help pupils to become ready for learning and to make progress in targeted areas.
- Pupils are clear about the next steps they need to make to move ahead with their learning. They understand the purpose of their learning and how it relates to the wider topic. This is because teachers have very clearly mapped out the learning so that they are clear about what the pupils need to learn and be able to do.
- Pupils are also clear about their next steps because of the helpful feedback they receive from their teachers. Pupils are encouraged to recognise their strengths but also to consider where they have gone wrong and how they might improve their work. Pupils are able to make mistakes and redraft their work in order to improve it.
- Not all staff fully understand the new assessment system introduced to prepare pupils for the more demanding requirements of the new curriculum. This limits their ability to ensure that all pupils, particularly the most able, are being sufficiently challenged.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are happy at this school. This is because staff 'go the extra mile' in ensuring that pupils are well cared for and have a stimulating, varied experience. The well-designed personal, social and health education programme ensures that pupils are taught necessary life skills from a young age. This programme complements the academic curriculum.
- Pupils are confident and happy to share their thoughts. Although they are very young, pupils know when to take their turn appropriately during a group discussion. They are

able to speak with clarity about their experience of school. Year 2 pupils spoken to by the lead inspector made many positive comments about the school. For example, one pupil said, 'All my teachers are kind and helpful.' Another pupil said, 'We learn really good stuff.'

- Pupils who have particular behavioural, emotional or social needs are well supported. This is because they engage with a dedicated programme that is skilfully and sensitively managed by key staff. This programme helps pupils to thrive in school and integrate well with their peers.
- A wide range of extra-curricular opportunities are on offer for pupils. Take-up for these activities is high because they meet a wide range of interests. Activities include: gardening, cookery, drama, gymnastics, working on the allotment, scooter club and 'inventors'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave in a sensible, orderly fashion. They are mostly kind and considerate to each other because they know what is expected of their behaviour. The school's behaviour management system makes rewards and sanctions clear to pupils and staff enforce it effectively.
- There is little bullying in the school and when it does occur it is effectively dealt with by staff. Some parents who responded to the Parent View survey did not agree that bullying is dealt with effectively. However, inspection evidence indicates that behaviour is carefully monitored and staff go to good lengths to ensure that all pupils are safe, happy and well looked after.
- The attendance of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, is improving. This is because staff are swift and proactive in their efforts to engage with families where attendance is unacceptably low. Regular and sensitive communication has helped to build strong working relationships between staff and parents. Staff also work well with external agencies, including the attendance welfare officer, to tackle poor attendance. However, reduced attendance because of unauthorised holidays continues to be a challenge, despite the best efforts of staff.
- All pupils, regardless of background or ability, arrive at lessons ready to learn. They are equipped well and take pride in their appearance and work. They show good attitudes to learning because they enjoy the work they are set. As a result, most pupils are conscientiously focused on the task in hand and follow instructions well.
- Pupils are encouraged to take on roles in school that develop their sense of personal responsibility. For example, lunchtime patrols, made up of Year 2 pupils in policeman helmets and fluorescent jackets, monitor the behaviour of other pupils. Lunchtime patrol members are stationed throughout the school to remind other pupils to walk appropriately through the building. This helps them to appreciate how a community depends on good order and the rule of law.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils currently in the school are making good progress across their different subjects, particularly in reading. This is because the leadership of teaching, higher expectations and effective curriculum revisions are having a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported so that they make strong progress. This is, in part, because the school's system for identifying pupils' needs is well developed. It enables the special educational needs coordinator to set well-matched, achievable and meaningful targets for pupils. Pupils also make strong progress because of the help they receive from other adults, both inside and outside of the classroom. These adults reinforce pupils' understanding and help clarify any misconceptions.
- Leaders have successfully invested in a range of activities and strategies to support disadvantaged pupils' achievement. These include initiatives to increase pupils' engagement with school so that they enjoy coming to school and are ready to learn. For example, staff make a concerted effort to encourage disadvantaged pupils to attend the range of after-school clubs on offer. This pastoral support complements the support in place to successfully develop aspects of pupils' learning, such as reading. Consequently, the progress currently being made by disadvantaged pupils is good. However, leaders acknowledge that they are not fully clear about which strategies to improve learning are the most effective.
- Work in pupils' books shows that all pupils, regardless of ability or background, take pride in the presentation of their work. They lay their work out carefully, using appropriate headings, and underline with a ruler. They also take the time and effort to write in neat, cursive handwriting. Pupils' work shows that they are keen to do their best work and improve it from one piece to the next.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are not being sufficiently challenged to achieve the progress they are capable of. This is because pupils are not being set work that pushes them to think more deeply beyond what is expected of other members of the class.
- Historically, pupils' attainment in all their subjects was consistently in line with average until 2015. Furthermore, the proportion of pupils achieving the highest levels increased year on year in all subjects over time. Disadvantaged pupils also achieved well in comparison with their peers in terms of these higher levels.
- Pupils' achievement in phonics has been lower than average over time. Leaders have taken decisive action to develop this area of teaching so that pupils' reading improves from an earlier age. Progress in Year 1 is beginning to match the good progress being made in Year 2.
- The number of children in the early years who achieve a good level of development is above the national average and has been so consistently over time.
- Achievement in writing and mathematics was below average in 2016 for groups of pupils of different abilities. Reading attainment was marginally higher than the national average. For all subjects, disadvantaged pupils did not achieve as well as their peers. However, leaders have analysed the reasons for this underperformance and taken action to ensure that current pupils are making the progress expected of them.

Early years

Good

- The early years coordinator has good strategic oversight of provision. She ensures that children are accurately assessed when they enter the school and tracked carefully as they move through Reception. This ensures that provision is largely matched to children's needs so that they make good progress.
- The quality of teaching is good because staff use their expertise and knowledge of children to plan stimulating activities that the children enjoy and learn a lot from.
- Children take full advantage of a rich diet of learning experiences, both in classrooms and in the outside area. These include manipulating objects and different materials, such as sand and water. Children develop their manual dexterity so that they learn to hold writing instruments correctly and shape letters carefully. These activities encourage children to explore their world with confidence. However, the most able pupils do not receive sufficient direction sometimes during child-initiated activities to ensure that they learn as well as they could.
- Staff know the children well and ensure that they thrive in a caring, supportive environment. Pastoral support is well targeted, particularly for those children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This means that children enjoy learning with each other because they feel comfortable and safe.
- Children behave well. They learn the same good habits and routines as pupils higher up the school. This means that, from an early age, children enjoy being preoccupied with the interesting activities they are given. However, some pupils stray a little off-task if they do not receive sufficient direction from staff.
- The strong relationships that staff build with parents help to ensure that children quickly adapt to life in school. Parents value these relationships because they are invited into school to discuss their child's progress and look at the work produced. As a result, they feel actively involved in their child's education.

School details

Unique reference number	109046
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10000729

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	266
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Esther Reeves
Headteacher	Tim Ruck
Telephone number	01454 866470
Website	www.ststephensinf.org.uk
Email address	tim.ruck@ststephensinf.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- St. Stephen's Infant School is larger than the average-sized infant school.
- The headteacher has been in post for 10 years.
- The majority of pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and who receive support is above average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a number of lessons; some observations were jointly conducted with leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders, groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, governing body minutes, attendance records and pupil premium documents. In addition, inspectors also considered safeguarding records and notes of visit from the school improvement adviser.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and observed their conduct at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took account of 29 responses to the online Parent View survey and 34 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Steve Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Marcia Northeast	Ofsted Inspector
Adam Matthews	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Bragg	Ofsted Inspector

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