

Branscombe Church of England Primary School

Branscombe, Seaton, Devon, EX12 3DA

Inspection dates

23–24 October 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Branscombe is at the heart of its community. It provides a caring, safe environment for the pupils in which they are nurtured as individuals.
- Teaching is good overall and sometimes it is outstanding, making use of the local environment to enrich the curriculum and bring learning alive for the pupils.
- Pupils achieve well across the curriculum. Standards in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 have improved in the last three years and are now above average.
- Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent because of the strong Christian ethos and wide range of cultural activities found within the school.
- The pupils are proud of their school, and share positive relationships with each other and with staff. Their behaviour in class as well as on the playground is sensible and courteous.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, evaluate the school's work closely and carefully monitor the quality of teaching and the progress of each pupil, providing support for those who might need it. This ensures that all pupils are given equal opportunities to succeed and to participate in all aspects of school life.
- Governors are closely involved in the day-to-day activities of the school and are highly effective in supporting the headteacher and staff while at the same time seeking further improvements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet of a consistently high quality to ensure outstanding achievement for all pupils.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop and use the skills required to work independently.
- There are rare occasions when work is not always pitched at the right level for all pupils in the mixed-age classes.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons or parts of lessons, all of which were joint observations with the executive headteacher.
- The inspector listened to pupils read from Years 1, 2 and 6. She also met with a group of pupils to find out their views of the school, and chatted informally to some during playtimes.
- She looked at pupils' work in their books as well as during their lessons.
- Meetings were held between the inspector and members of the governing body, and a telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector also met with the school's special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspector viewed 11 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and one staff questionnaire. In addition, she took account of two letters she received from parents and spoke informally to a few parents in the playground.
- School documentation was examined, including statutory policies, as well as evidence of the school's own monitoring records and self-evaluation, attendance records, assessment data showing the progress of all pupils and the latest school improvement plan.

Inspection team

Anne Newall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Branscombe is a much smaller than average primary school with one class for Reception children and Years 1 and 2 and another class for pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. All pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium, which is funding provided by the government to aid pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in the care of the local authority, or children whose parents are in the armed forces, is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is lower than average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school is part of 'The Jubilee Federation' of schools established in September 2012 with another local school. The federation is managed by a single governing body. The headteacher is executive headteacher of both schools in the federation.
- There is an on-site breakfast club which is managed by the governing body and so formed part of this inspection.
- The on-site pre-school is managed separately and did not form part of this inspection.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum levels expected for pupils' attainment and progress for primary schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching to raise pupils' achievement to outstanding by:
 - ensuring pupils develop the skills they need to work independently and providing them with frequent opportunities to practise these skills
 - ensuring that in all lessons the work pupils are required to complete always provides individual pupils with the level of challenge they need in order to consistently achieve the progress they are capable of.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Very small cohorts of pupils join the school each year with varying levels of development on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage. Many have attended the on-site pre-school and by the time they enter Reception most children have the skills and abilities expected for their age. By the end of their Reception Year the children are well prepared to begin Year 1. This is because they enjoy a nurturing environment, good teaching and care, and a wide range of activities planned to meet their developmental needs.
- During Key Stage 1, pupils continue to progress well in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards of attainment by the end of Year 2 have risen steadily over the last three years and have been significantly above the national average for the past two years.
- Pupils' reading skills are taught well through systematic teaching of letters and sounds in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. In 2013, all the Year 1 pupils met the expected standard in the national check of their understanding of letters and the sounds they make. The re-check of Year 1 pupils from the previous year found that all had met the standard by autumn 2012.
- As a consequence, pupils become good readers who enjoy books and discussing the stories they have read. By the time pupils enter Year 6 they confidently tackle a range of genres from a variety of authors.
- Rates of progress vary for individual pupils from year to year in the Key Stage 2 class but by the end of Year 6 their achievement is good and standards attained in the national English and mathematics tests are above average. All pupils, including the more able, make at least the expected progress for their age, and many make more than expected.
- The school ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed and that discrimination of any type is not tolerated. Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs make similarly good progress to all other pupils because they receive the attention and support they require to meet their individual needs.
- The income received by the school to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium is spent on tailored interventions, the impact of which is closely monitored by the headteacher and governors. As a result, this group of pupils achieves well. Their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is similar to and sometimes better than that of their classmates.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching over time is good and some is outstanding, but there is not yet enough outstanding teaching to ensure all pupils make consistently well above average progress in their mixed year classes. This is because there are a few occasions when some pupils are not given work which offers them the correct level of challenge.
- Staff are aware that some pupils are very dependent upon adult support when tackling their work and have introduced strategies to develop pupils' independent learning skills. For example, when working in groups without an adult, pupils take specific roles such as 'questioner' or 'summariser' to keep each other focused. However, the pupils are not yet sufficiently familiar with this system for it to be completely successful in promoting their independence.
- Teachers make effective use of questioning to gauge learning and to encourage pupils to think more deeply. Very good marking provides pupils with guidance on how to improve their work. Pupils value this advice and act upon it. Pupils know their targets and have high aspirations for their future.
- Pupils learn well when they are engaged in their activities. For example, pupils in Key Stage 2 enjoyed learning the poem 'From A Railway Carriage' by Robert Louis Stevenson which they chanted to the rhythm of the train moving. Good questioning by their teacher enabled them to paint the picture in their minds. In Key Stage 1, pupils applied their skills to the practical activity

of converting a pictogram into a bar chart by physically moving pictures of their favourite mini-beasts on a chart, before producing their own charts in their books.

- Displays of pupils' work are used effectively to enhance pupils' learning and understanding. They are referred to during lessons to remind pupils of the skills they have learned which they can apply to their current work.
- The teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' achievements, through supporting the learning of individual pupils as well as by leading intervention programmes for groups of pupils in need of extra support in order to raise their progress.
- Pupils enjoy learning and respond well to motivational teaching. An outstanding example of this was observed in a music lesson, when all the pupils learned a new song with a complicated chorus, which they performed with gusto.
- Excellent use is made of the local village and surrounding environment to give pupils opportunities to connect classroom learning to real-life situations. In this rural community, pupils learn to grow and cook food, which on occasion they share with villagers in the village hall. This supports their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school provides pupils with an extremely caring and supportive Christian environment in which pupils are valued as individuals.
- Pupils display good attitudes to learning and behave very well both indoors and outside when at play. There are rarely any incidents of misbehaviour because pupils say that they follow the 'Branscombe Waves', which are the school rules created by the pupils, and enjoy earning team points. The school's logs of incidents of misbehaviour show very few incidents over time. Older pupils take care of the younger ones and playground 'Buddies' perform their responsibilities well.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are highly positive, and because pupils spend several years with each of the teachers, their individuality is known and respected.
- Pupils have a strong sense of community and through events in the church and the community centre they make a strong contribution to good multi-generation relationships.
- Although they say there is no bullying at school, the pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is, including cyber bullying. They are confident that if they had any problems, they would be listened to by staff. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in their environment, for example when walking in the narrow village lane or at the local beach.
- The parent support adviser provides valuable support to parents, liaising with school staff as well as external agencies for the benefit of pupils. Her work is also valued by the school because it is effective in promoting home–school links.
- The school does all it can to promote good attendance, but with such a small school roll the extended absence of a small minority of pupils has had a significant impact on the overall attendance level. The attendance of the vast majority of pupils is above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is a proactive leader who shares her strong vision for the future of the school with all members of the school community. She successfully gained their support to link with another small primary school to form 'The Jubilee Federation'.
- Through the federation there have been opportunities for staff to develop their teaching skills and share expertise, and for the pupils to go on a range of trips with pupils from the other school and to work together. This has enabled all those involved to become part of a wider community of learners and is excellent preparation for the future education of the pupils.
- The improvement in pupils' achievement over the last three years confirms that the school has the capacity to improve further.
- The curriculum is interesting and is enriched by a wide range of trips and visitors as well as by

use of the local National Trust land, forge and bakery. There is a wide-ranging array of extra-curricular activities for pupils which provide something for everyone, for example baking, weaving, sport, music, drama and construction. Through local community links pupils have produced a tea towel which they sell locally to raise money, kept in their Community Fund at the village post office, with which they support a pupil's schooling in Ghana.

- The vast majority of parents are very satisfied with the education their children are receiving, and say that staff know their children well, are approachable and, as one parent said, 'provide the pupils with the experiences and skills they need to venture into the wider world'.
- The scent of hot buttered toast provides a warm welcome to pupils attending the breakfast club, a facility which is appreciated by those parents who use it.
- Staff take safeguarding seriously. All statutory requirements are in place and on a day-to-day basis the safety of pupils is paramount.
- The local authority has confidence in the headteacher and governors to lead the school well and it provides light touch support.
- The funding provided by the government to support the development of physical education in schools has not yet been received by the school, but the intention is to use it to develop staff expertise across the federation.

■ **The governance of the school:**

Governance is good. The governing body, which is responsible for both schools in the federation, has many strengths. Governors share the headteacher's determination to seek constant improvements to benefit the pupils. By federating two schools they have promoted the future financial security of this very small school and budgetary savings have enabled more teacher support for pupils. Governors work seamlessly with the headteacher to monitor and evaluate the school's work. They contribute to school development planning through their good knowledge of day-to-day activities in school as well as through their links with subjects and classes. Governors are involved in the performance management of the headteacher and have a good knowledge about the performance management of teachers in relation to national standards and salary progression. They keep a close eye on the progress of each pupil. The impact of the pupil premium funding is analysed in depth so that governors can make informed decisions about future spending. Governors fulfil all their statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding and to the school's finances.

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	113348
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	426806

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	32
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Johnson
Headteacher	Katie Gray
Date of previous school inspection	14 November 2008
Telephone number	01297 680339
Fax number	01297 680549
Email address	admin@branscombe.devon.sch.uk

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