

Ampney Crucis Church of England Primary School

School Lane, Ampney Crucis, Cirencester, GL7 5SD

Inspection dates

3–4 December 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The school is exceptionally well led by the inspirational headteacher. Together with senior leaders, she has established a highly successful, shared vision that leads to excellent teaching and high standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and plan for the needs of all their pupils very well. Consequently, pupils are highly engaged in their learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They love learning and behave exceptionally well, both in lessons and around the school. Their exemplary behaviour makes a strong contribution to their learning and excellent achievement.
- Pupils who receive extra support through additional government funding make the same rapid progress as their classmates. These pupils achieve exceptionally well.
- Teachers regularly and accurately assess pupils' work. Pupils know what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils feel completely safe at school; a view that is totally endorsed by their parents.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils have an impressive knowledge of Christianity and of other different faiths and cultures.
- Pupils enjoy an extensive range of exciting learning topics and themes.
- The headteacher is relentless in her determination to bring about sustained improvements to the school. In this endeavour she is ably supported by a very strong governing body.
- Leaders have used performance procedures exceptionally well to bring about significant and sustained improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement since the last inspection.
- The effectiveness of the early years is outstanding. Children are very well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons. Most of these were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Observations were also made of the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent). Pupils in Year 1 read to the inspector.
- Time was set aside to talk to pupils during lessons, during lunchtimes and at playtimes. One group of pupils discussed their views about the school.
- A scrutiny of pupils' English and mathematics books was undertaken to establish the quality of their work.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, the mathematics and English leaders, six members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a range of school documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings, records of lesson observations, the management of staff performance, information on pupils' progress and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Account was taken of the 44 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View. Questionnaires were returned by 11 members of staff. Their views were also considered.

Inspection team

Joyce Cox, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ampney Crucis Church of England Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The school is very popular and is oversubscribed. Numbers on role have steadily increased from 58 in 2007 to the current level of 92.
- There are just four classes in the school. All pupils are taught in mixed-age groups.
- Early years Reception children attend full time and are taught in a class shared with Year 1 pupils.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well below average, at around 5%. This premium is additional government funding which supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The school meets the government's floor targets which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics.
- At around 7%, the proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below the national average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- Six per cent of pupils have parents who speak English as an additional language which is well below the national average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that Reception children's learning is always carefully matched to their ages and abilities.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is an outstanding leader who has the highest possible aspirations for all the staff and pupils. She is supported by equally committed and exceptionally effective senior and subject leaders. Together with the governing body, school leaders constantly strive to improve all aspects of the school for the pupils' benefit. Every pupil is valued as an individual, exceptionally well cared for and supported to achieve high academic and personal standards.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' behaviour is outstanding. The curriculum emphasises respect and tolerance and ensures that all pupils have equal access to learning and are safe from any forms of bullying or discrimination.
- Improvements made since the last inspection are evident in all key stages. Pupils in all year groups make rapid progress. The management of teachers' performance is extremely rigorous. Teachers receive tailored support to help them improve their skills and they are also very good at sharing their expertise with each other. Consequently, teaching is at least good, with much that is outstanding.
- Teachers say they feel exceptionally well supported by the headteacher. One writes, 'We are a strong close-knit team and we feel greatly valued by our head who is a strong, inspirational leader, unafraid to say/do what she believes in, highly professional and always open to the opinions of her staff.'
- Careful tracking of pupils' progress ensures that support is quickly provided for any pupils at risk of falling behind. The school makes excellent use of the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Thanks to the excellent support they receive these pupils make rapid progress and achieve as well as their peers.
- Pupils are very excited by the subjects they study at school. The varied and broad school curriculum is enhanced by many trips and visitors. The curriculum is extensively enriched by music, art, sport, outdoor learning and visits, for example, to Stonehenge and the railway museum at Swindon.
- Promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development lies at the heart of the school and all pupils know and live by the school's 'Values' which include respect, kindness and trust. Staff prepare pupils very well for life in modern Britain.
- The fact that everyone in the school adheres to its values also ensures that all pupils have equal access to learning and are safe from any form of bullying or discrimination. Safeguarding requirements are met in full.
- The additional primary sports funding has been used to provide expert coaching for staff and pupils as well as to widen the range of sports on offer. All pupils take part in regular exercise and general levels of fitness have improved.
- Parents are overwhelming supportive of the school and its leadership. All parents would highly recommend the school to other parents and one said, 'I would quite happily pay for the excellent quality of education my children receive at this school.'
- The local authority has enormous confidence in the school. It acknowledges pupils' high standards of achievement and provides 'light touch' support. The headteacher shares her expertise by supporting two local schools and the special needs leader has helped local schools to draw up the new requirements for pupils with special educational needs.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly effective. Governors ensure that the school improves and that development plans remain sharply focused on pupils' achievement. As regular visitors to the school and through discussions with staff, parents and pupils, governors are highly knowledgeable about the quality of teaching. They keep a close eye on the school's performance data and ask the headteacher challenging questions when necessary.
 - Governors make sure that all available funding is used effectively to help all pupils achieve exceptionally well. They are involved in setting targets for the headteacher and carefully oversee the arrangements for setting targets for other staff. They are fully aware that teachers' pay awards should always be securely linked to the progress that pupils make.
 - Together with senior leaders, they ensure that all statutory safeguarding requirements are fully met and that, as a result, pupils are very safe at school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. In lessons and as they move about the school, pupils demonstrate exceptionally positive attitudes to learning, towards each other and to staff and visitors. Their exemplary behaviour makes a strong contribution to the high quality learning that takes place. They work exceptionally well together to discuss their work and to support each other.
- Pupils relish the responsibilities they have been given for aspects of behaviour and safety, for example when working as play leaders organising games and activities at lunchtime. They help out with the organisation of playtime activities so that other pupils can enjoy these as much as possible. Pupils are extremely proud of their academic work and this is reflected in the excellent quality of presentation of work in exercise books. They also take great care of the school building and surrounding grounds.
- The school's core 'Values' permeate through all aspects of the day and are referred to in lessons, in the dining hall and in the playground. There have been no exclusions for many years. Learning is never disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying of any kind. As one pupil said, 'why would we?'
- The very active school council raises considerable amounts of money to help fund projects such as a scooter park. All pupils love getting a 'blue slip' from the headteacher for good work or behaviour. When pupils get 18 blue slips they receive a much-treasured 'Governors' Award.'
- Attendance is consistently above average, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of coming to school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel very safe and have been rigorously taught how to keep themselves safe. For example, older pupils can explain the importance of keeping information about their identity safe when using the internet. All pupils sign an 'Internet Safety' agreement with the headteacher.
- Pupils speak about how much they trust and respect the adults who work with them. They feel that they can share any concerns with staff and are confident that these would be dealt with quickly and sensitively.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the different types of bullying but insist that bullying is not an issue in this school. They say that they would not hesitate to speak to an adult if they were concerned, not just about themselves, but also about any of their friends being bullied.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is consistently good and much is outstanding. This helps pupils to learn quickly and achieve exceptionally well during their time at school.
- Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour and insist on prompt starts to lessons and demand high standards of presentation in all pupils' work. Pupils meet these expectations very well and work is usually finished to a high standard of neatness and accuracy.
- Very strong features of the teaching are how effectively and promptly staff check pupils' understanding as the lesson progresses and the skilful way in which teachers question pupils to check their knowledge. These features have a very positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Pupils and staff have excellent relationships, based on mutual trust and respect, which creates a very positive atmosphere in all classes. Pupils often choose to work in silence because they feel by doing so that they can really concentrate and produce their best work without any distractions.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is very good. Pupils decode and read real and 'unreal' words very well. Older pupils quickly learn to develop inference and deduction skills as they have many chances to develop their comprehension skills. Guided reading is well taught and organised and this ensures that reading standards are high across the school.
- The teaching of mathematics is often very impressive, for example with technology used exceptionally well to enable the teacher to introduce new learning to two different groups of pupils at the same time! Pupils are frequently required to use and apply the skills they have learnt in real-life problem-solving situations. Lessons skilfully engage all pupils and challenge the most able to think really hard.
- Teachers extend pupils' skills at all times in writing lessons and offer them many opportunities to practise their writing at length in other subjects. For example, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils have written impressive diary entries about life in Anglo-Saxon England.
- Teaching assistants' considerable skills are exceptionally well targeted to support individuals and groups of pupils to ensure they make excellent progress.

- Teachers consistently challenge the most-able pupils in English and mathematics to reach the highest levels and extend their knowledge and understanding. Teaching over time has been highly effective in ensuring the most able reach high standards in their work
- Marking is very good. It ensures that all pupils know exactly what they have to do to improve and it is very effective in accelerating progress.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- All groups of pupils, including those learning English as an additional language, make excellent progress from Year 1 to Year 6. By the end of Year 6, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are usually well above average. Standards have been sustained at a consistently high level for five years. In 2013 the school was the highest performing school in Gloucestershire.
- Progress across the school is very strong in reading because pupils' skills are developed exceptionally well. Pupils say they love reading and, therefore, read often and widely. Developing reading has been a key priority of the school.
- A governor's visit in 2012 noted that some pupils did not fully understand their reading targets. Immediately staff rewrote these targets, workshops were held for parents to explain how they could support their children at home to develop more complex reading skills and lists of recommended books for every year group were published on the website. Pupils now read exceptionally well from a wide range of books and other materials and study the styles of authors such as Michael Morpurgo and Anne Fine.
- All pupils make exceptional progress in writing and mathematics. Pupils are given excellent opportunities to apply and reinforce their mathematical and writing skills in all subjects. Staff place a huge emphasis on the key skills of number bonds, place value and times tables so that all pupils become confident and resilient mathematicians.
- Pupils achieve exceptionally well in writing because all staff provide them with clear 'Recipes for Success' and 'story planners,' indicating the key features they need to use when writing in different genres. Teachers also very skilfully model how to elicit precise, relevant information from information texts and internet research. For example, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils made excellent gains in selecting salient facts when writing biographies of famous scientists such as Isaac Newton and Alexander Fleming.
- The most-able pupils make excellent progress because they are encouraged to 'aim high' and staff support them very well, for example, with 'extra challenges' in class should they complete their work quickly. Current school data and work seen in pupils' books provide strong evidence that standards across the school continue to rise with more higher Level 6s predicted in writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2015.
- The numbers of pupils eligible for support through additional funding is very low in most classes. These disadvantaged pupils make the same rapid progress as their classmates in English and mathematics and their progress and attainment are above that of similar pupils nationally indicating excellent achievement.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive very well-planned support which effectively matches their needs. They have equal access to the opportunities for learning which the school provides for all other pupils. Consequently, their progress, given their starting points, is at the same high level as that of other pupils.
- The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as other pupils. Skilful teaching and the school's rigorous tracking of their progress ensure that these pupils get the same opportunities to achieve as well as their peers in school.
- Parents and carers all feel that their children learn exceptionally well at the school. One commented that she was 'blown away' by the high standards of writing and the very skilful way in which staff foster a 'real love of learning, perseverance and hard work'.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children start in Reception with skills and abilities which are generally typical for their age. Routines and expectations are quickly established. This helps children to settle quickly and to make a very good start to their education. Consequently, they make rapid progress and all children achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception year. Strong and effective attention to the early development of reading, writing and mathematical skills ensures that children are very well prepared to face the challenges of Year 1.

- Teachers take special care to engage all families with their children's learning. This journey begins when parents receive a 'summer holiday book' in which they record details of their family. This helps staff to talk about special people in each child's life and ensures children feel more secure and confident in school. Parents greatly appreciate the 'gentle induction to school life' and the 'sensitive and caring' staff.
- Close partnership working with all pre-school providers enables staff to make accurate judgements about each child's precise starting points. Consequently, teaching is normally pitched at exactly the right level and any necessary support is put in place promptly. This ensures that every child makes excellent progress.
- There are a very small number of occasions when children are given activities, such as placing various coins in order of their value, which are too complex for some children to comprehend. Although more-able children quickly grasp how to do this, some other children do not do so and become restless.
- However, the vast amount of the children's learning is skilfully matched to their ages and abilities. For example, they have great fun when using coins to go shopping at their outdoor farm shop. Their teacher, complete with flat cap and apron, models the role of the shopkeeper and they happily and successfully learn to pay for fruit and vegetables and get change. Staff are skilled at being excellent 'play partners,' and through skilled interactions they greatly enhance children's learning and language development.
- Assessments of what children can do are rigorous. Children, including those for whom the school receives additional funding, make rapid progress as do more-able children.
- Reception children behave exceptionally well. They get on really well with each other and with the staff who teach them. They quickly learn the consequences of wrong or unkind behaviour. Children listen carefully to their teachers, concentrate well and they follow all instructions immediately.
- Leadership and management of the early years are outstanding. All staff work together as a cohesive team and ensure children's safety and well-being at all times. Links with other local schools are well developed and provide additional chances for staff to enhance their practice by observing best practice and sharing their skills with others.

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	115673
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	448460

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Lazenby
Headteacher	Anne Marie Wilkie
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 October 2009
Telephone number	01285 851440
Fax number	01285 851440
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