

St Nicholas CofE Primary School, Henstridge

Ash Walk, Henstridge, Templecombe, Somerset BA8 0QD

Inspection dates

11–12 January 2017

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 provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher's drive and ambition has ensured that pupils' standards have improved rapidly since the last inspection.
- Pupils achieve well and standards are rising. The quality of teaching across the school has improved. Highly effective training and support from other schools have secured improvements in teaching and outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They are polite and courteous to staff, visitors and each other.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in and around school. Pupils feel safe and they know that a trusted adult will help them if they have a worry or concern. Parents overwhelmingly agree with this view.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed extremely well through the rich variety of extra-curricular activities on offer.
- Not all pupils acquire good knowledge, understanding and skills in geography and history.
- Governors know the school well and have played a key role in helping the school make the rapid changes required to improve.
- Pupils are taught to read well. They read often and older pupils read books by a wide variety of different authors. Standards in reading are above the national average by the end of key stage 2.
- Middle leaders have a secure understanding of their subject areas. Leaders' actions to improve outcomes and raise standards in a wide range of subjects are effective.
- The curriculum is much broader than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils enjoy a wide range of subjects taught.
- The use of the sports premium is carefully considered. Pupils are very proud of their sporting successes.
- Children in the early years get off to a good start in their learning and achieve well. They are well prepared for Year 1.
- Teachers do not always use what they know about pupils' ability to plan activities that stretch the most able pupils' mathematical skills in key stage 1.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the breadth and depth of skills and knowledge taught in the geography and history curriculum, focusing leaders' plans more precisely on improving rates of progress in these subjects.
- Improve teachers' use of assessment to inform planning and adapt learning – providing greater challenge for the most able, especially in mathematics in key stage 1.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has been inspirational in her drive to rapidly improve the school since the last inspection. Her ambition and high expectations have helped everyone to bring about the changes that were needed.
- Many of the teachers are relatively new to the school. Nevertheless, staff share the headteacher's determination for all pupils to achieve. There is a sense of shared ambition and positivity about the school's future.
- Training is prioritised by leaders and valued by teachers. Support from a partner school is having a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching. Alongside this, staff share their expertise with each other and use what they have learned to improve outcomes for pupils rapidly.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Many commented on the improvements made since the previous inspection, especially in the quality of teaching. Typically, parents spoke about the good information that they now receive from the school. They think that homework is 'about right, not too much and not too little'.
- All leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The plan to improve the school is well focused and ensures that key issues are tackled effectively.
- The curriculum provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. A strong moral code underpins the school's values, which are routinely explored during collective worship. Pupils' successes outside of school are also celebrated on the school website and in celebration events. Pupils participate in a wide range of additional trips, visits and enrichment weeks which they enjoy. All this helps support the pupils' understanding of modern British values.
- Subject leadership has improved significantly. Most leaders know their subjects well. They use this information to plan actions which are improving outcomes for pupils. Actions are at an earlier stage in history and geography and are less well focused than in other areas. Consequently, the depth of pupils' knowledge and skills are not as high in these subject areas.
- The curriculum has improved to ensure that pupils are offered a wide range of subjects that are taught to a good standard. Subject leaders' passion and determination have increased pupils' engagement. For example, the school has selected some pupils to be 'digital leaders' who help to train other pupils and staff to stay safe online. They are very enthusiastic about their new roles and plan to introduce blogging across the school.
- Leaders and governors make sure that the additional money for disadvantaged pupils is spent wisely. As a result, disadvantaged pupils, including those who are the most able, make at least similar progress to other pupils nationally. Leaders are very effective at identifying barriers to learning and giving pupils the support that helps

them learn best. Governors are well informed about the additional pupil premium funding and monitor its spending effectively.

- The newly appointed teacher who works with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is ensuring that planned support is helping pupils make good progress from their starting points. Some pupils are now making exceptional progress because of this work. Governors talk confidently about the progress made by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and have the information they require to plan this provision effectively across the whole school.
- The sports premium additional funding is used very effectively. Pupils love learning from the specialist physical education (PE) teacher who works across the whole school. Pupils' enthusiasm for healthy activity is sparked by their early morning run around the school field. The pupils are knowledgeable about how the extra sport that they now do is helping them to keep fit and stay healthy. The emphasis on entering more competitive sporting competitions is paying off. Pupils and governors spoke of the recent successes in sporting competitions.

Governance of the school

- Governors have helped create a strong ethos and vision for the school. They have high expectations for the school's continued success and are passionate about its continual improvement.
- Governors care about the school and have an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. They have been instrumental in bringing about the changes needed to improve the school since the last inspection.
- Governors challenge and support school leaders very well, holding them to account for the school's ongoing improvement. Their effective monitoring, supported by information from the headteacher, ensures that they help the school continue to improve.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The safeguarding arrangements in school are robust and monitored by the headteacher and governors. All staff are well trained in all child protection procedures and first aid. They receive the most up-to-date information and understand how to keep pupils safe if there is a worry or concern about a pupil.
- The safe recruitment of staff is highly effective. Applications are thoroughly checked and leaders make sure that new staff are appropriately vetted.
- The school works effectively with outside agencies and responds promptly to support pupils and their families. However, all the information that the school holds to safeguard pupils is not as organised as it could be to ensure leaders can respond swiftly if the designated safeguarding lead is absent.
- Detailed risk assessments are in place to ensure that pupils are safe. Pupils say they feel safe and parents agree.

- Governors have a clear understanding of how to keep pupils safe. They check the school's safeguarding arrangements rigorously, ensuring that the systems in place are effective for both pupils and parents.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers plan lessons that are typically well matched to the pupils' needs. They encourage pupils to think hard and deepen their understanding so that pupils learn effectively and achieve well overall.
- Sometimes the work in mathematics in key stage 1 is set too low and lacks challenge, especially for the most able pupils. When this happens, pupils do not reach the standards they are capable of.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed in school and help pupils learn. Where pupils' learning is at its best, adults provide good support for pupils who need it, but allow them to flourish without too much direction.
- Strong subject knowledge ensures that pupils are taught to a good standard, enabling them to make good progress over time. The school employs a number of specialist teachers who have a good impact on standards in PE and music. However, history and geography are not as well taught as other subject areas across the school because teachers do not know the standards and content of the curriculum well enough.
- Teachers generally follow the school's feedback and marking policy although recently appointed staff are still getting to grips with the finer details. Pupils recognise that the feedback they receive helps them to get better and they act on the advice. Pupils use this feedback to improve their work.
- Homework is well supported by parents and pupils in school. Reading is highly valued in school and pupils enjoy reading on most days of the week.
- The teaching of reading is a strength of the school and pupils can confidently read words using the sounds they know. The older pupils have a good understanding of what they are reading and are taught to a good standard. For example, during a reading lesson pupils in Years 5 and 6 enthusiastically explored challenging themes and meaning behind poems.
- Most parents say that the information they receive from the school helps them know how well their child is doing. They also feel able to come and speak to their teachers if they have a concern.

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 proud of their school and know that the teachers are there to help them to learn and flourish.
- Across all year groups, pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They demonstrate excellent attitudes towards their learning and persevere with challenging tasks,

sometimes getting very animated with their explanations to each other. Pupils enjoy learning and take pride in their work. They are not afraid to make mistakes and these good learning attitudes are celebrated in class and collective worship.

- The school prepares pupils to become active citizens in modern British society. They respect one another for their differences and these are celebrated. The 'pupil voice team' take responsibility for improving aspects of school life and take their role in school very seriously. They have raised money for a variety of charities and are great ambassadors for the school.
- Pupils are very aware of how to stay safe online and what to do if they have a concern or worry. The school has been very active in ensuring that this is the case.
- Pupils say that they feel safe everywhere in school. Parents agree with this.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Across the school, pupils live up to the high expectations placed on them by all the staff. This good level of behaviour continues during playtimes and lunchtimes, and as the pupils move around school.
- Both pupils and parents think that behaviour is good in and around school.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare but is dealt with promptly by the staff. Parents agree with this. Pupils know what to do if there is any bullying and are clear that they have to speak to a trusted adult if they feel worried or concerned about anything.
- Pupils are good at looking after each other. They are polite and courteous and the older pupils are very good at looking after the younger ones.
- Attendance is above the national average and continues to improve. The headteacher has worked relentlessly to ensure that all pupils attend regularly. The school has clear procedures to follow in the event of any child being absent. Attendance is now celebrated in school and the school has worked hard to ensure that persistent absences are minimised.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- There has been a rapid rise in standards since the previous inspection. Outcomes are now broadly similar to or exceed national averages in all key stages at the school. From a range of different starting points, pupils' progress over time is good. In key stage 2, improvement has been sustained from the previous year. Pupils are well prepared for the challenges of secondary education by the time they leave school.
- Pupils make good progress across the school in a range of subjects. However, standards in history and geography are not as strong as other areas of the curriculum. Pupils' work shows that their rates of progress are much slower in these subjects than in other areas of the curriculum.
- The most able pupils have not always done as well as they should. School leaders are aware of this and are taking action to improve the levels of challenge across the school. Work in books, observations in lessons and talking to pupils show that these actions are beginning to have a significant impact on standards. In most year groups,

the most able, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are reaching the standards they are capable of. Many have caught up from previously low standards. However, the work seen in mathematics books in key stage 1 does not yet match these higher standards.

- The overwhelming majority of parents who took part in Ofsted’s online questionnaire and those who were spoken to during the inspection agree that their children make good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, do well as a result of highly effective support. Although numbers are small, progress generally matches or exceeds that of other pupils in school as a result of teaching that meets their needs.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do well as a result of additional support that is well planned. This focused planning and monitoring of standards has enabled them to strengthen their skills much more rapidly.
- Outcomes in reading are strong across the school. In 2016, all pupils in Year 1 achieved the expected standards in phonics. This is due to the good teaching of phonics in school. Standards in reading are maintained throughout the school as a result of good teaching and pupils achieve above the national average by the end of key stage 2.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning in the early years. They have been uncompromising in their determination to ensure that the quality of teaching is good and that the children get off to the best possible start.
- Children start in Reception with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age. Leaders are aware of previous weaknesses in assessment and have put these right. They have an accurate picture of children’s starting points and a good grasp of their learning across the curriculum. Children make good progress in the early years and outcomes are often above the national average.
- Phonics is taught well. Children use their knowledge of letters and sounds to write simple words and sentences. Some children are being challenged to write longer sentences alongside older Year 1 pupils.
- Clear expectations and a calm, warm welcome at the beginning of the day ensure that children are well behaved. All statutory welfare requirements are met.
- Teaching is good and activities incorporate all areas of learning. Teachers match the learning to the needs of the children well, motivating children to learn, listen to each other and show interest.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified quickly. Focused, high-quality support ensures that they make good progress.

School details

Unique reference number	123760
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10024930

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	94
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Norman Symcox
Headteacher	Alison Shearer
Telephone number	01963 362308
Website	www.stnicholashenstridge.co.uk
Email address	office@stnicholashenstridge.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 December 2014

Information about this school

- The school does not meet the requirements on the publication of information about special educational needs and/or disabilities on its website. The school meets all other requirements.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- St Nicholas is a much smaller than average primary school. Pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes.
- The majority of pupils are White British and very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The number of pupils supported by the additional pupil premium funding is much lower than the national average.

- The proportion of pupils receiving support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Pupils' learning was observed in all classes, jointly with the headteacher. The work of pupils in all classes was scrutinised. Many pupils were spoken to about their work during lessons and informally around school. The inspector listened to pupils read from different year groups and gathered views about their experiences in school.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other leaders, governors and members of the teaching and support staff. The views of staff were gathered from 17 responses to the staff survey.
- The inspector took into account 38 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 39 responses to the pupil questionnaire. Discussions were held as parents dropped off their children at school.
- A range of documentation was considered, including information on pupils' attainment and progress, the school's improvement planning, records of monitoring of teaching and learning and information on the management of teachers' performance. Procedures for safeguarding pupils, including information relating to attendance, behaviour and referrals to social services, were examined.

Inspection team

Richard Lucas, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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