

Burlescombe Church of England Primary School

Burlescombe, Tiverton, Devon EX16 7JH

Inspection dates

17–18 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive headteacher's unwavering drive and commitment to raising standards has led to rapid positive improvements in the quality of teaching following an unsettled period with many staffing changes. Consequently, pupils are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Skilled senior leaders share the executive headteacher's sense of purpose. All are knowledgeable in their specific area of leadership and play their part in raising standards.
- Governors are actively involved in the life of the school. They understand and are fully committed to their role in improving the quality of education. They are well informed about the progress pupils make and hold leaders to account for the standards pupils achieve.
- The core values of the school run through all it does. These values are well known and understood by pupils, who talk about trying to live by them every day. Pupils respond to the high standards expected of their behaviour. During the inspection they were invariably well mannered, polite and considerate.
- The vibrant curriculum captures the interests of all pupils. Teachers plan imaginative lessons which motivate pupils. However, their planning does not use assessment information in subjects other than English and mathematics accurately enough for pupils to make rapid progress in these curriculum areas.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are now good. This is due to systematic and wide-ranging checking by leaders, so that most pupils receive teaching that results in good learning. Occasionally, some pupils could be given more challenging work.
- Children in the early years make good progress. This is because staff accurately plan work for their individual needs. Expectations for children's behaviour and what they can achieve are high.
- Parents are very positive about the school. They appreciate the individualised care, support and challenge their children receive.
- A wide range of sport and extra-curricular activities broadens learning opportunities for pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the challenge in work for some pupils, so that they move on to more difficult work once they understand what they are doing.
- Raise standards further in curriculum subjects other than English and mathematics, through more diligent use of the school's assessment procedures in these subjects, so that teachers can plan learning that provides even greater challenge.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher sets the aspirational tone for the school. In recent years, there was a turbulent period with changes of teaching staff. Governors and the executive headteacher recognise that some teaching was not as good as it should have been. This was reflected in pupils' progress in writing and the weaker progress made by boys and the most able pupils. Consequently, leaders set up a clear, thorough and systematic plan to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards.
- Leaders, governors and staff are united in their overarching plan of how to improve standards and outcomes for pupils at the school. They are highly ambitious for all pupils and this is reflected in recent accelerated improvements in progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have forged a strong relationship with Webber's Church of England Primary School, the sister school in The Valley Partnership. Leaders work across both schools and the collaboration is supporting recent improvements. Parents recognise the role of the partnership in the rapid change and are appreciative of the dramatic improvements.
- All senior leaders have a good understanding of their role. Each has introduced new ideas which have led to better progress. For example, in mathematics, a quick daily times table challenge and in English a 'two-minute teaser' are improving pupils' mental agility. The early years leader has led the development of the outside area to stimulate pupils' writing. The special educational needs leader encouraged more involvement from parents in planning individual programmes of work for their children. As a result, the progress for all pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is now good.
- Leaders systematically monitor the quality of teaching in English and mathematics to inform teachers' performance management. This draws on a range of sources and is improving the quality of teaching and support that pupils receive. This can be seen in pupils' increased confidence and more rapid progress. Recent data shows that most pupils are making good and often accelerated progress.
- Leaders have benefited from the involvement and support of the local authority adviser. The adviser has supported and challenged leaders through the recent improvements by, for example, observing teaching alongside leaders, scrutinising work in books in English and mathematics and analysing data.
- Leaders strongly promote the core values of the school. These underpin all aspects of school life including leadership and management. Positive relationships between adults and pupils support the progress of all pupils. Fundamental British values are embedded within the school's core values. However, leaders recognise the need to develop further all pupils' understanding of different cultures present in modern Britain.
- Leaders use additional funding well for the small number of disadvantaged pupils, who make at least the same progress as other pupils nationally in English and mathematics. Governors are clear about the ways in which funding has been spent and how this has made a difference.
- The use of the sport premium has had an impact on the well-being of pupils. Initiatives include training for staff and provision of an impressive range of well-attended after-

school clubs. All pupils in the school take part in swimming lessons. Pupils recognise the impact on their fitness. A significant amount of the funding has been allocated to a scheme which reflects the school ethos. This can be seen daily in the calm, thoughtful and orderly way pupils behave in classrooms. Pupils also take part in sporting events with other schools.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders choose themes which will appeal to all pupils, especially boys, such as 'Space' or 'The Great Fire of London' and so that all curriculum subjects are covered appropriately over the course of a year. Staff make sure each curriculum topic is as lively and engaging as possible and this is appreciated by pupils.
- Pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics is good. However, the assessment system for these subjects is not as strong as that for English and mathematics. Leaders recognise that they need to perfect this, so that teachers can plan even better learning opportunities for pupils.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the leaders and staff. They speak about their children thriving and being 'inspired educationally'.

Governance of the school

- Governors are passionate about the school and have been steadfast in their contributions to recent improvements. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and of areas needing improvement. Governors are thorough in holding leaders to account. They understand all aspects of monitoring that school leaders undertake and use a wide range of information to assure themselves of the progress pupils make. For example, having sat in on a discussion between a pupil and a leader, a governor was struck by the clarity of the pupil's account of their progress and had noticed that written feedback from a fellow pupil had led to improved work.
- Governors have supported and challenged the executive headteacher to ensure that all pay awards are made appropriately.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Well-organised systems and positive relationships promote a safe culture in the school. Pupils particularly appreciate being able to nominate a designated adult that they can talk to should they ever need to.
- Governors and leaders ensure that all policies related to safeguarding are updated regularly and are on the school website. All safeguarding training for staff is up to date and all staff are familiar with the risks pupils may face, including radicalisation and extremism and child sexual exploitation. Staff know who the designated safeguarding leads are and who to go to should they have a concern.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have high expectations for all pupils. The work in pupils' books is well presented. Time is given for pupils to reflect on their learning and they are eager to know how to improve. In general, teachers set work for pupils that is appropriately challenging. However, sometimes pupils are not challenged sufficiently and continue to work through simpler tasks they already understand.
- The feedback teachers give to pupils about their work follows the school's thorough assessment policy. Pupils have a clear understanding of how this supports their

learning. For example, Year 2 pupils explained how structured written support at the start of a lesson helps them. Older pupils spoke about the benefit of the process of a succession of writing tasks with increased reminders of how to improve. They were clear about the progress this had helped them make and could pick out examples of how they were able to continue using the skills they had learned. Where assessment is strongest, it is clear pupils act on it quickly and make good progress.

- The challenge for the most able pupils is good. For example, following a 'two-minute teaser' literacy task, the teacher skilfully questioned pupils and they could provide rapid answers using appropriately sophisticated vocabulary. The most able readers in key stage 2 discuss books at a high level. Younger readers read with fluency and expression.
- The teaching of reading is strong. Both girls and boys talk enthusiastically about the reward systems and say that the school encourages them to read. Older pupils talk passionately about books and say that literary techniques taught in class, such as 'show not tell' have influenced their choice of reading material. They are comfortable with books that challenge them. Younger pupils also read books which accurately reflect their ability. While younger pupils use a range of strategies to work out words they do not know, they rarely use their knowledge of letter sounds successfully.
- Parents recognise that the teachers know their children well, so that parents of most-able pupils talk about the additional challenge provided. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs refer to the good match of work for their children. Overwhelmingly, parents believe their children are thriving.
- Teaching assistants are skilled contributors to pupils' learning. They gauge well when to intervene. In all classes, teachers and teaching assistants work closely alongside each other. Consequently, pupils achieve well when working alongside teaching assistants.
- The imaginative choices of topic theme support learning. Within these, staff plan lessons which excite pupils. For example, following a visit from a writer linked to 'The Great Fire of London' topic, Reception-age children were enthused about writing with quill pens. Pupils practise their reading and writing skills across other subjects, for example using appropriate grammar, punctuation and sentence structure during writing based on the story of the good Samaritan. However, teachers' planning does not make full use of the school's assessment procedures in subjects other than English and mathematics to strengthen pupils' learning across the curriculum.
- Children in the early years make a good start to the school. Staff make sure work is accurately planned for their particular needs. The Reception-age children tackle work with enthusiasm, whether this is led by an adult or whether they are working on their own. Children in the early years have made good progress in their writing since joining the school, supported by accurate teaching of phonics.
- Homework is popular with both pupils and parents. Pupils appreciate the choices they are given and find it motivating.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. All are making the progress they should and some have made rapid progress recently. Staff match work precisely for individuals. Parents are encouraged to be involved in plans made for their child. The leader for special educational needs ensures that teachers identify pupils with any additional needs when they start school so that no opportunity is missed.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Collective worship is a highlight of the school day. Pupils clearly enjoy this lively celebration. All join in with enthusiasm and there are opportunities for their views to be explored. The youngest and oldest pupils have clear roles of responsibility during the worship which they take seriously.
- Pupils embrace the core values of the school, such as compassion, truthfulness and bravery. This is clearly reflected in their positive behaviour. The core values are prominently displayed in the school and well known by all children. Pupils are well mannered, polite, and show respect and consideration for others. For example, they are able to nominate other pupils for a core value award, which is presented in front of the whole school. Pupils are clearly proud to receive these awards but are also proud to be able to nominate others.
- Pupils learn about healthy lifestyles and about regular exercise.
- Pupils report that the school council has an important role in changing the school for the better.
- Pupils feel safe in the school. They have been taught about e-safety and cyber bullying. Pupils feel safe having a designated adult of their choice who they can go to with any concerns.
- Pupils can talk about British values, such as democracy. However, they are less confident and knowledgeable talking about modern Britain as a multicultural society. Leaders recognise this as an area they need to improve.
- Parents comment positively on the care the school provides. Parents of pupils new to the school remarked on how welcoming it is, typically commenting, 'I couldn't have asked for a better start.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school promotes high standards of behaviour, mainly through all staff and pupils being encouraged to adhere to its core values. Behaviour in the lunch hall is impeccable and in the playground older and younger children play happily together. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner.
- The school encourages good behaviour from the very start. Adults working with Reception-age children consistently reinforce turn-taking, politeness and the need for good manners. As a consequence, the behaviour of children in the early years reflects these high expectations.
- Pupils appreciate the good behaviour in the school. They report that it is rare to hear a pupil being told off. Most pupils are very polite, they say. All pupils say that their teachers encourage them to be friendly.
- Parents support the way in which leaders manage behaviour. Those who have had minor issues report that these are dealt with quickly and effectively. The school's records of behaviour incidents reflect what parents say about the school: that these incidents are minor, investigated thoroughly and resolved quickly.
- Staff do not tolerate stereotypical or derogatory language. On a rare occasion of stereotyping, it was immediately and thoroughly challenged and satisfactorily resolved.

- In the recent past, some pupils' attitudes towards work have not always been positive. Leaders were quick to identify the underlying causes and make changes quickly. On the few occasions when some pupils are not challenged sufficiently, they lose focus and engagement.
- Attendance is above the national average and few pupils are persistently absent. Absence and punctuality is monitored thoroughly.
- Bullying is extremely rare.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2016, pupils' progress in writing at key stage 2 was significantly below the national average. This was principally due to the limited progress made by the boys. In reading and writing, the most able pupils who had performed well at key stage 1 did not make the progress they should have.
- Pupils across the school are now making at least the progress they should and many are making accelerated progress in writing. This can be attributed to the improvements in teaching and assessment, and the new rigorous monitoring by leaders. The work in pupils' books, particularly those of older pupils, shows rapid progress.
- In mathematics, pupils are making good progress. Specific additional support is provided for pupils who need to catch up, including disadvantaged pupils. This has made a positive difference in a short time. In 2016, pupils' progress in mathematics at key stage 2 was close to the national average.
- Pupils read fluently and make good progress. Pupils at all ages display a passion for reading. While the impact of the good teaching of phonics can be seen in the writing of younger pupils, some pupils do not use their knowledge as effectively when reading.
- For pupils at the end of key stage 1 in 2016, attainment was at or above the expected standards for reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. This is because their needs are assessed well and their progress is closely monitored. Support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective.
- Few disadvantaged pupils attend the school. They make similar progress to their classmates because the pupil premium funding is successfully used to provide appropriate support. Over recent years, most disadvantaged pupils met the standards expected for their age group at the end of both key stages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the early years do well, often from low starting points, so that most achieve a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year. Staff plan carefully for the individual needs of each Reception-age child and this is reflected in their good progress.

School details

Unique reference number	113350
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10024931

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	49
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Sue Rowland
Executive headteacher	Deborah Eveleigh
Telephone number	01823 672521
Website	www.burlescombe.devon.sch.uk/ www.burlescombepimary.co.uk
Email address	admin@burlescombe.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 December 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is part of a federation, The Valley Partnership, alongside Webber’s Church of England Primary School.
- The school is smaller than average with very small cohorts, including the early years. Some groups may constitute just one individual.
- The majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils with support for special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not believed to be English is well below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in each class, often jointly with the executive headteacher. He also observed a whole-school assembly.
- The inspector carried out a scrutiny of books alongside the executive headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the chair of the governing body, the executive headteacher and senior leaders from The Valley Partnership.
- The inspector spoke to pupils informally in class, in the playground and in the lunch hall to seek their views about the school. A more formal meeting was held with pupils from Years 2 to 6.
- The inspector heard pupils in key stage 1 and 2 read.
- The inspector spoke to 11 parents on the playground and took into account 28 responses on Parent View and 15 free text responses. The online questionnaire responses of 13 staff and 15 pupils were also taken into account.
- The inspector scrutinised a number of documents, including information about pupils' achievements and records concerning pupils' safety, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Matthew Shirley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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