

Bruton Primary School

Higher Backway, Bruton, Somerset BA10 0DP

Inspection dates

24–25 February 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 provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders provide ambitious and determined leadership. This has resulted in significant improvements in teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' outcomes since the previous inspection.
- The well-respected head of school has brought energy and passion into the school. She has ignited a love for learning in the pupils.
- Leaders' decisive actions to tackle previous weaknesses have proven effective. All pupils make good progress. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The teaching of reading is highly effective. High-quality teaching engenders a love of books. By the time pupils leave the school they achieve above the national average in reading.
- The most-able pupils are challenged effectively and achieve high standards, particularly in mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils, and pupils who have special educational needs or disability are well supported and make good progress.
- The school places a high priority on the promotion of citizenship. As a result, pupils are well prepared to make a positive contribution to society.
- The broad range of knowledge and experience within the governing body has supported improvement across all aspects of the school's work.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the improvements which have taken place since the previous inspection. They praise the inspirational leadership of both the executive headteacher and the head of school.
- Pupils say that they are very safe in school and that they are well looked after. They behave well, apply themselves well in their work and are proud of their achievements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although progress in writing has improved, it is still not as strong as that in reading and mathematics.
- Levels of attendance, although improving, are still slightly below the national average.
- Not all middle leaders are as effective at driving progress forward with the same rigor as their more experienced colleagues. Their impact is less marked.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership by:
 - ensuring that senior leaders provide training and support for middle leaders to enable them to all effectively lead their areas of responsibility and achieve outstanding outcomes for pupils.
- Raising teachers' expectations of the quality and quantity of pupils' independent writing by:
 - ensuring that teachers help pupils to transfer their strong basic skills to sustained and extended pieces of writing.
- Further improve levels of attendance and eliminate persistent absence.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Since the previous inspection, school leaders have made significant improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. The high aspirations and relentless drive of senior leaders have been effective in improving outcomes for pupils.
- Work across the two schools in the federation is contributing strongly to pupils' improving performance. Teachers attest to the benefits for their teaching of joint training and opportunities to check the accuracy of the assessments against teachers from other schools.
- Leaders have established a highly cohesive school community. They have gained the trust and commitment of staff, parents and pupils. The strong ethos of respect for others pervades the school's work.
- The performance management of the staff is thorough and linked to a coherent approach to professional development. The executive headteacher and head of school together provide good support and challenge to the staff. This approach has led to significant improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Fundamental British values are woven into the rich spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum. Pupils demonstrate an insightful awareness of current ethical and moral issues. For example, pupils debate the rights of girls to an education and the impact of poverty on people's lives. Differing views are respected. This, aligned to the good standards that they achieve academically, means that pupils are increasingly well placed both to contribute to and benefit from life in modern Britain.
- The broad curriculum provided by 'Learning Quests' allow pupils to practise basic skills and gain a wide range of general knowledge. Children speak enthusiastically about focus events such as 'Chemical Energy' and 'Enterprise Week'.
- Leaders have used the pupil premium effectively. The progress of pupils who are eligible is regularly and carefully checked by the governing body. Carefully targeted support has resulted in disadvantaged pupils making good progress from their starting points. Many of the disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 made better than expected progress across all subjects in the 2015 tests.
- The school makes effective use of the additional sports premium funding. After-school clubs attract high numbers of pupils from different age groups. For example, approximately one fifth of pupils in the school take part in the running club, which now forms part of a local league. Good links with other schools and providers have helped increase pupils' participation in sport and clubs outside of the school.
- The school has developed positive relationships with parents. As a result, both in conversations with inspectors and through Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, parents express very positive views about the school. Parents view their children as happy, achieving and well cared for by the school.
- Senior leaders have established a group of committed middle leaders. Those who have been in post for some time have had a significant impact on standards. For example, pupils' attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening is now above the national average. This is the result of the Key Stage 1 leader's clear guidance to staff.
- A number of the other middle leaders are new to the role this academic year. They have improved the consistency in marking and feedback, and have established clear non-negotiables across their teams. However, they need further training to further raise the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They do not act with the same level of rigour and relentless determination for rapid improvement demonstrated by their senior leaders.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governors contribute effectively to school improvement.
 - Governors are well informed and have an accurate understanding of the school's performance. They make regular checks on the work of the school, holding school leaders to account.
 - Financial management is good. The governing body maintains appropriate oversight of the performance management of the staff and has ensured that pay progression is properly linked to evidence of successful performance.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders are tenacious in ensuring that staff are well trained. Staff speak knowledgeably about the appropriate actions to take should they have concerns about children's welfare. Leaders create a safe culture in the school. Designated staff work closely with

parents, local services and agencies, so that pupils who need specialist help are able to get it.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers' higher expectations of what pupils can achieve have enabled pupils to 'catch up' with national expectations. Consistently good teaching enables pupils to make good progress from their different starting points.
- Teachers and support staff create a positive climate for learning. They support and motivate the pupils well. This guidance, support and motivation has been effective in improving outcomes for pupils.
- Effective leadership has resulted in the teaching of reading being a strength of the school. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading. Children become proficient readers in the early years and continue to make good progress throughout the school. Older pupils talk about books and reading with a passion. They say that their 'Reading Rainbow' encourages them to read regularly at home. A good range of books in classrooms and the school library provides a wide choice and variety of reading materials.
- A consistent approach to assessing pupils' work has contributed strongly to pupils' improved attainment and progress over time. It has helped teachers to identify the next steps in pupils' learning with greater precision. Pupils say that teachers help them to improve their work. There is a consistent approach across the school, with all pupils following up guidance they are given.
- In mathematics, the school has focused on developing a clear strategy for calculation. The work of middle leaders in this aspect has resulted in good gains in the pupils' understanding in mathematics. Pupils' strong calculation skills have equipped them with the knowledge and confidence to tackle problem-solving and reasoning activities.
- Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to plan interesting topics and lessons that extend pupils' knowledge well. 'Learning Quests' provide creative links between subjects. This has led to gains in pupils' achievement because they use and apply skills in wide-ranging contexts. For example, in a Year 6 geography lesson, pupils had to consider and record the positive and negative effects of river usage by different groups. The adults' challenging questions provoked deep thinking and resulted in high-quality written responses by pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive very thorough support. The leader checks on their progress regularly and provides effective guidance, support and resources for staff. The quality of the support the pupils receive results in good gains in their learning and often better rates of progress than their classmates. On occasions, teachers' expectations of the quality of writing are not sufficiently challenging. Pupils write well and have a good knowledge of spelling, grammar and punctuation. However, teachers do not always make their expectations clear enough. Where this happens, progress slows down. Not enough children make the better than expected progress that their skills show that they are capable of achieving.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- There is a strong culture of mutual respect in the school. Pupils say that they feel well supported and that adults in the school always listen to them. A group of pupils told inspectors, 'There's a lot of trust in this school.'
- Visits to other communities and places of interest broaden pupils' awareness of different cultures. Pupils display high levels of curiosity and respect for differences. The school actively promotes equality of opportunity and has been awarded the British Council International School Award for Global Citizenship.
- Pupils told inspectors that, 'teachers and children are always smiling in school. That's because we all enjoy being here.' They exude confidence.
- Pupils say that bullying does not happen any more and that teachers act quickly to sort out problems. The school's records of behaviour show that reoccurrence of poor behaviour is extremely rare.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of a range of strategies and practices to keep themselves safe online. They have a strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils reported that that, 'Bullying used to happen in the school a couple of years ago but it doesn't now. Assemblies and our teachers help us to understand and help each other.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They show consideration for others, speak with an air of confidence and are polite, respectful and welcoming.
- In lessons, pupils respond quickly to adult instructions and are eager to please. They apply themselves well independently and cooperate well in paired tasks. Their conduct in lessons is often exemplary.
- Well-established routines at play- and lunchtimes result in a calm and happy atmosphere. Pupils play happily and safely together.
- Leaders' decisive action has led to improvements in the level of attendance. This still remains at slightly below the national average. The number of pupils who are persistently absent has dramatically reduced since the previous inspection. However, a small minority of parents do not ensure that their children attend regularly and consistently.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Children start at school with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age. By the time they leave the early years provision or Reception, the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development is above the national average. Children achieve equally good outcomes across all areas of learning.
- Improvements in teaching since the previous inspection have led to an increasing proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check. Leaders have been resolute in striving to raise the quality of teaching in this area. As a result, achievement has been above the national average for the last two years. Current school assessment information on pupils' achievement suggests that this trend of improvement of phonics attainment will continue.
- The school's strong emphasis on phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) and early reading skills ensures that pupils quickly become confident and fluent readers. By the time they leave Year 6, their reading levels are above the national average. All pupils make good progress in reading.
- There have been notable improvements in the proportions of the most-able pupils making good progress, particularly but not exclusively in mathematics. This was identified as a weakness in the previous inspection. Middle leaders have been effective in developing a consistent approach to calculations. As a result, pupils have very strong computation skills. These skills prepare pupils well for problem solving and reasoning activities.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability often make better than expected progress. Teachers go 'the extra mile' to ensure that any barriers to learning are reduced if not eliminated. Early intervention helps pupils to catch up quickly. The strong nurturing ethos of the school supports children in believing in themselves. Pupils demonstrate high levels of resilience. Their 'can do' attitude enables them to achieve well across all subjects.
- Close and effective attention is given to the needs of the very few pupils who speak English as an additional language. This support enables them to make good progress from their starting points.
- The small proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school achieve well across all subjects. Leaders' careful checks on progress helps them to hold teachers to account. As a result, the school is effective in closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils. Many achieve better than other pupils nationally across reading, writing and mathematics, particularly those with low starting points.
- Pupils' learning in other subjects such as science, geography and history is good. Pupils absorb information quickly about many subjects. They explain their knowledge confidently.
- Pupils make good progress throughout the school from joining in the early years, and an increasing proportion are achieving above national average standards in all subjects by the end of Year 6. Consequently, they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Standards in writing have improved. In 2015, Year 6 pupils achieved above the national average. Work in books demonstrates that pupils across the school write often. Their spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate. 'Learning Quests' provide ample opportunities for pupils to write in a range of contexts for a purpose. However, sometimes teachers do not give sufficiently explicit guidance for extended pieces of writing. As a result, the quality of pupils' composition in writing is hampered. Fewer pupils make better than expected progress in writing than in reading and mathematics.

Early years provision

is good

- Children's achievement in Reception is good. They settle quickly into school because of effective induction arrangements. Close partnerships with parents and pre-school support children's readiness to learn.
- Leaders accurate assessments demonstrate that children are joining the school with number skills below those typical for their age. Quick action was taken to work closely with nurseries and pre-schools to support progress in this area. An increased emphasis on number and one-to-one support is raising standards in this area.
- Children who have special educational needs or disability and disadvantaged children are supported effectively so that their progress is in line with others. Increasingly, the learning of most-able children is extended by stimulating activities.
- Children learn well across a range of activities, both indoors and in a safe and secure outdoor area. For example, during the inspection children were developing their counting skills by walking on bucket stilts on a number line to 20.
- Children make particularly good progress in reading and phonics. Staff model and promote the accurate use of language, including specific vocabulary for mathematics. This is leading to good gains in their learning.
- Areas of the classroom are used to reinforce skills in literacy and mathematics as well as developing skills across all seven areas of learning. Pictures around the room support children's understanding of the many cultures in our society. Children have access to resources and are provided with good opportunities to initiate learning activities themselves.
- Staff get to know the children well and are increasingly developing links with parents to share and celebrate learning. Parents say that staff are approachable and are pleased with the level of education and care their child receives.
- Children behave well, enjoy warm relationships and are safe in the setting. They show curiosity and delight in their learning.
- Strong leadership and management of the early years provision have created a cohesive staff team. Adults undertake regular training so that the quality of their work is continually improving.
- Leaders ensure that additional government funding is used effectively to narrow the gaps for disadvantaged children. There is early intervention and well-planned individual and family support for the very few children who attract this funding. As a result, these children make good progress.
- From their starting points, children make good progress in their Reception year. They leave the reception class well prepared to start in Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	123899
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10002423

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adela Crichton
Headteacher	Mark Solomon
Telephone number	01749 812331
Website	www.brutonprimary.org.uk
Email address	Sch.070@educ.somerset.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 November 2013

Information about this school

- Bruton Primary School is an average-sized primary school. The school is federated with Upton Noble C of E VC Primary School. The two schools form the East Somerset Federation. The executive headteacher leads, and a single governing body serves, both schools.
- The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school is receiving support from a local leader of education who, until recently, was the headteacher of Greenfylde Church of England First School in Ilminster.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics for pupils in Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes and observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons. One lesson was observed jointly with the head of school. A short number of visits to classrooms were made also with the executive headteacher, to look at pupils' work and the range of activities on offer to them. Inspectors talked informally to pupils and heard some younger pupils read.
- Inspectors observed a school assembly, playtimes, lunchtimes and talked to parents at the start of the school day and took account of the 54 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Discussions took place with senior leaders, middle leaders, a representative from the local authority, governor representatives, teachers and support staff. A telephone discussion also took place with the local leader of education who works with the school.
- Two representative groups of pupils from Years 2 to 6 were spoken with, to gather their views about the school and talk to them about their learning. Inspectors also took account of the 29 responses to the pupil questionnaire and 15 staff responses.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including senior leaders' plans for improvement, information on pupils' progress and records relating to attendance safety and welfare.

Inspection team

Tracy Hannon, lead inspector
Gareth Simons

Ofsted Inspector
Ofsted Inspector

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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