

Bridstow CofE Primary School

Bridstow, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 6PZ

Inspection dates

15–16 September 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

- The new headteacher, in partnership with the governing body, has acted decisively to provide a clear direction for the school, and secure its financial future. Effective procedures for checking on pupils' progress are raising expectations for what pupils and teachers can achieve.
- Leaders are exceptionally skilled at identifying how to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and working with others to ensure that they learn well.
- Standards in phonics are rising rapidly. Information supplied by the school and the local authority indicates that Year 6 pupils have achieved highly in this year's key stage 2 reading tests.
- Staff make detailed assessments of children's achievements in the early years, and use these records effectively to plan children's next steps.
- Key stage 2 pupils' progress in mathematics, although improving, lags behind their progress in English.
- Subject leadership does not yet contribute fully to the planning and monitoring of teaching.
- Current improvement plans are reaching their conclusion and require further extension into the current academic year.
- Teaching is good. Teachers are knowledgeable, and check pupils' understanding regularly so that they can adapt their lessons when necessary.
- Nonetheless, teachers sometimes give insufficient attention to arousing intellectual curiosity and ensuring that pupils think in new ways.
- Teaching assistants explain learning in small steps and question skilfully to make sure that pupils understand the work.
- The regular opportunity to respond to the detailed marking of their work enhances pupils' progress.
- Assessment and record-keeping in subjects other than English and mathematics at key stage 2, however, do not provide a basis for the development of specific skills in those other subjects.
- A wide range of extra-curricular provision enriches pupils' learning. Good playground equipment encourages them to lead healthy lives.
- Pupils rightly feel entirely safe in school. They conduct themselves well and take consistent pride in their work.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by challenging pupils to be more curious and think harder so that they achieve more.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing the assessment and recording of pupils' progress at key stage 2 in subjects other than English and mathematics so that teaching in these subjects can progressively build on what pupils can already do
 - extending the contribution which subject leaders make to improving the quality of teaching
 - constructing an updated improvement plan which will enable governors to check regularly and in detail on the school's progress.
- Increase pupils' progress in mathematics at key stage 2 by raising the expectation of the rate at which they should acquire mathematical skills and understanding.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since his appointment, the headteacher has united the staff and the wider school community and provided a clear sense of purpose. Regular meetings to discuss the progress of each pupil hold teachers closely to account and enable leaders to plan support for those pupils at risk of falling behind. This new focus is improving the quality of teaching.
- The headteacher has made sure that the school is already benefiting from the federation arrangement with Brampton Abbotts CofE Primary School. Staff observe good practice in the partner school, and teachers from the two schools regularly check each other's judgements about pupils' work. Federation has also enabled leaders to establish a sustainable staffing structure.
- Senior leaders evaluate teachers' performance effectively using, as a starting point, how well their pupils progress. Staff, including those very new to the school, spoke highly of how training has enabled them to develop their skills.
- The school's curriculum is broad, with particular strengths in music, physical education and technology. Pupils benefit from numerous visits to places of interest and the school offers all key stage 2 pupils a residential experience. Extra-curricular activities are also very popular, with pupils taking part in a good range of creative and practical activities.
- The school has spent the physical education and sports premium very effectively on specialist coaching and on increasing participation. Pupils particularly enjoy sporting fixtures against other schools.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development very well. This is reflected in excellent relationships among pupils, and between pupils and adults. They are taught to be respectful and caring to others and there is the opportunity, for example, to contribute to a local foodbank. The school gives pupils an insight into other cultures, recently devoting a day to the celebration of life in Jamaica. Through the school council and the opportunity to shape the development of their lessons, pupils learn about the British tradition of democracy and the importance of participation.
- Leaders have established a new system of assessment in reading, writing and mathematics based on a commercial scheme. Teachers do not measure pupils' achievements in other subjects, however, so they do not have the basis when teaching a new topic to build on pupils' existing skills and understanding.
- Starting in the early years, leaders demonstrate great skill and persistence in identifying pupils' individual needs, involving external agencies when appropriate. These assessments are then used to adapt pupils' learning. Leaders monitor closely the impact of any special provision and amend it when necessary. This enables additional money for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to be targeted very effectively.
- The school's self-evaluation is detailed and accurate. The school is benefiting from the impact of plans made by the headteacher when he joined the school. However, there is currently no single improvement plan which would enable governors to monitor the school's progress in detail this academic year.

- Those leaders and teachers who are already involved in the planning and checking of learning in particular subjects have recently secured important improvements, especially in the quality of teaching in phonics. However, staff lack an overview of teaching and achievement in subjects other than English and mathematics. The subject leadership role is underdeveloped and does not contribute effectively enough to the school's monitoring of teaching.
- A group of nine local primary schools, the Wye Valley Learning Network, has provided important support for the school in checking teachers' judgements and developing leadership skills. The local authority has provided support in some key areas such as in the review of safeguarding and assistance with the establishment of the federation.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a good overview of the school. Over the past year they have taken bold and successful action to secure the future of the school through federation. This has enabled them to set a balanced budget and produce a viable long-term financial plan. They have chosen a partner school which is well matched in terms of its values, and made sure that parents and others understood their strategy during a difficult transitional period.
- Governors make sure that they are well informed about pupils' progress at the school and how it compares with that of pupils nationally. They check on the expenditure of additional money to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and evaluate its impact on their progress.
- The governing body makes sure that appropriate checks are made on all staff who join the school, and others who have contact with children. They check regularly that the school's procedures keep pupils safe in all respects.
- Governors involve an independent adviser in their management of the headteacher's performance so that decisions about his role are well founded. They provide an independent perspective on the pay and performance of other staff.
- Governors are reflective about their own performance and have been persistent in finding training to increase their skills and knowledge, for example about how to evaluate information about pupils' achievement. They are committed to improving their effectiveness even further.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's arrangements meet all statutory requirements. The headteacher has updated the school's policies and staff, including those new to the school, are entirely familiar with school procedures and how to identify pupils at risk.
- Staff keep meticulous records, work well with parents and react quickly to help pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Leaders' collaboration with other agencies that work for children is noticeably effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Observations of learning, scrutinies of pupils' workbooks and the school's assessment information show that teaching is now typically good. It is characterised by very strong relationships between pupils and adults in the classroom. At the time of the inspection

new teachers were quietly and firmly establishing their expectations. The inspector saw the very few pupils with a history of challenging behaviour now learning well.

- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and explain new ideas clearly. They use the correct subject-specific terms from the youngest age onwards, and expect pupils to do the same.
- In English and mathematics teachers plan carefully to make sure that the work set builds on what all pupils already know and understand. Tasks generally present a good level of challenge, although pupils told the inspector that this was occasionally not the case. Teachers question pupils closely so that they can gauge who understands the work and can make any necessary changes to the learning.
- The school's detailed assessments of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and good communication between staff provide a strong platform for their learning. Teaching assistants work effectively with both groups and individuals to break the learning down into smaller steps. They use skilful questioning to ensure that pupils understand the ideas involved.
- Teachers mark books frequently, thoroughly and consistently in line with the school's policy. They ensure that pupils write neatly and pay due attention to spelling, punctuation and grammar. Marking adds significantly to pupils' progress because pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on their work and to respond. Pupils correct their mistakes and also act on more general suggestions for improvement.
- Homework makes a good contribution to learning. Pupils explained that they enjoyed doing imaginative tasks at home but that there was also the opportunity to reinforce key learning such as times tables. Pupils read regularly at home, and home learning is integrated into the learning records of children in the early years.
- Phonics is taught to younger pupils in a structured way and successfully adopts a multi-sensory approach. Pupils learn to write the letters which correspond to the sounds alongside learning to read. Older pupils are able to use their phonic knowledge to sound out any unfamiliar words. The teaching of writing across the school ensures that pupils write neatly and pay due attention to spelling, punctuation and grammar, and also gives pupils the opportunity to explore their own ideas and write at length.
- Mathematics teaching combines the practice of routine calculations and skills with tasks that require pupils to apply their understanding and emphasise the practical importance of mathematics. Pupils study a full range of topics and are encouraged to explain their reasoning. Nevertheless, the rate at which key stage 2 pupils acquire mathematical skills and understanding is only now matching that of pupils in other schools.
- Teaching routinely provides pupils with different challenges and interesting topics to explore, such as the study of castles, which was absorbing key stage 1 pupils during the inspection. However, inspection evidence also showed that teachers rarely ask questions or set tasks which stimulate pupils' curiosity, or require them to think in unfamiliar ways.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Pupils feel entirely safe in school and say that they cannot recall an incident of bullying or discrimination. School records confirm that such incidents are very rare indeed.
- The school successfully teaches children how to be safe in several respects, including awareness of road safety. Since the last inspection staff have paid particular attention to e-safety and pupils have a well-developed knowledge of how to stay safe online. Posters around the school reinforce the key messages.
- The school has recently taken appropriate measures to enhance security. It has upgraded the perimeter fence, and a recent newsletter politely explains that parents should not enter the school without an appointment. A member of staff with first aid training is always on site during the school day. Above all, however, pupils' welfare is maintained by the care and vigilance which all members of staff display.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and enjoy school. The school regularly highlights different values such as 'endurance', and pupils recall these clearly and understand how they apply to their life in school. Leaders have created a bright, comfortable and purposeful learning environment, but a few pupils lack just a little self-confidence.
- The playground has a wide range of particularly well-designed and well-maintained equipment. This promotes both harmonious playtimes and healthy lifestyles.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy learning, and are willing to study hard. One pupil explained to the inspector that his key stage 2 class sometimes fell silent simply because everyone was concentrating on their work. Pupils collaborate effectively and naturally help each other with their work.
- Pupils follow staff instructions quickly and settle promptly to their work. They take an unflinching pride in their work, and present it to the best of their ability. Pupils' conduct, moving around the school and at social times, is excellent.
- Records held by the school and confirmed by inspection evidence show that the very few pupils who enter the school, typically in the early years provision, with uncooperative behaviour make rapid progress. The school has not excluded a pupil in recent years.
- Pupils' attendance has improved over recent years. Overall attendance and that of disadvantaged pupils is now just above the national average for all pupils. The attendance of the small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is a little lower, but this reflects the necessity for some to attend hospital regularly. The number of pupils who are persistently absent is reducing rapidly.
- Just occasionally, when the pace of work slackens, some younger pupils lose a little concentration.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Information supplied by the school and evidence from last year's workbooks show that pupils are making good progress in English and mathematics across almost all year groups. Pupils' books, displays and the school's website show that pupils often achieve highly in their topic work too. This reflects substantial gains in the relevant knowledge, understanding and skills in many other subjects, but these outcomes are not recorded formally.

- In the most recent set of published results, pupils left Year 6 in 2015 with a level of attainment which was average overall, having made progress from their different starting-points which was also broadly in line with pupils nationally. Although small pupil numbers and changes in the key stage 2 tests make exact comparison difficult, information supplied by the school, and endorsed by the local authority, indicates that in 2016, Year 6 pupils have attained more highly and made better progress than those in the previous cohort. Outcomes in reading were above average.
- Since the last inspection, key stage 1 pupils have attained in line with the national average. However, the proportion of Year 1 pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics test has varied. It dipped in 2015, but – according to unvalidated information – rose again in 2016 to be in line with pupils nationally. This, taken together with the fact that all seven pupils who had not previously met the standard did so in Year 2, is evidence that the more consistent teaching of phonics has led to a substantial improvement in standards of reading.
- Numbers of disadvantaged pupils in each cohort are very small. However, information supplied by the school and confirmed by inspection evidence shows that disadvantaged pupils are now making progress in line with their classmates and, where comparable, with other pupils nationally.
- Some of the pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities start in the school with considerable academic and social difficulties. Inspection evidence shows that because their needs are accurately assessed and their achievements carefully monitored, the majority make good progress from their different starting points.
- Over recent years, the few most-able pupils in the school have made at least expected progress. During the inspection, some most-able pupils explained that they were well served by the school library, read widely and were willing to do research to broaden their learning. One Year 3 pupil in a history lesson said that he had gone online at home to find out about hieroglyphics. Exercise books showed that the most able pupils had made the most of the opportunity to develop their own ideas in writing. There was nevertheless only occasional evidence that they had been required to ‘think outside the box’.
- At key stage 2, pupils’ achievement in mathematics has not matched that in English over the last couple of years. The results of the Year 6 tests in 2016 suggest that both progress and attainment in the subject are improving, but the pace at which pupils acquire understanding and skills in mathematics is not yet enabling pupils to catch up sufficiently to make good progress across the key stage.

Early years provision

Good

- The majority of children start the Reception Year with skills and abilities which are at, or a little above, those which are typical for their age. In recent years, however, a small number in each cohort have entered the school needing considerable support. In these instances, leaders ensure that the children’s needs are assessed promptly, involving external agencies when necessary, and appropriate learning plans put in place.
- Children in the early years make at least expected progress. In 2015, the proportion of pupils leaving the Reception class having attained a good level of development was average. Unvalidated information supplied by the school indicates that this proportion rose a little in 2016. Children are, therefore, sufficiently well prepared for key stage 1.

- Teaching in the early years is good. Well-planned activities stimulate and retain children’s interest, with an appropriate focus on the first elements of literacy. Staff question skilfully to check on the progress of individuals. This information is then recorded in detail in their learning journeys and used to plan activities which build precisely on these achievements.
- During the inspection, staff were working to establish clear expectations and procedures for the new school year. However, children already responded well to adults’ requests, and treated each other and the school environment with respect.
- Leaders plan the transfer of children with great care, visiting them in their nursery setting on several occasions. Staff work increasingly closely with parents to ensure that they fully understand each child’s needs, and that parents are aware of how they can best contribute to children’s learning. Parents who spoke to the inspector were delighted by the welcome they had received and the start that their children had made.
- The early years staff work well together. They are already collaborating closely with their counterparts in the federated school, and are keen to learn from best practice wherever it is to be found.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the provision, and are ambitious to improve it further. For example, they are aware of the importance of accelerating progress in literacy for those who need to catch up, and plan to make the outdoor area just as stimulating as the indoor classroom. Arrangements are in place to check this year’s baseline assessment against those of other schools.

School details

Unique reference number	116869
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10009255

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kim Sandman
Headteacher	Dan Brearey
Telephone number	01989 562623
Website	www.bridstow-school.co.uk
Email address	admin@bridstow.hereford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 March 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The headteacher took up his post in April 2016. The school has entered into a 'soft' federation with Brampton Abbotts CofE Primary School, which is close by. Each school retains its own governing body, but the same headteacher leads both schools. Two teachers joined the school in September 2016. A local leader in education from Whitchurch Church of England Primary School has recently provided support to the school.
- Bridstow CofE Primary School is a much smaller than average primary school. Pupils attend full time in the Reception class. The school runs a breakfast club on a pay-as-you-go basis.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British.

- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is slightly below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.
- In 2015, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all classes in the school. Three observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also visited a school assembly, and observed pupils' conduct at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspector held discussions with senior leaders, other leaders, class teachers, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- A group of pupils selected at random met with the inspector. He also spoke to many other children informally. The inspector listened to pupils in Years 2, 4 and 6 read.
- The inspector looked at some of the work already produced this academic year and, with the headteacher, scrutinised in depth all the work produced by a small number of pupils last year. He considered a wide range of information about pupils' current and recent performance.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documents, both electronically and on paper. These included: development plans and their evaluations; curriculum plans; records of how leaders check on teaching; minutes of governing body meetings; policies; and records showing how the school supports vulnerable pupils.
- The inspector took into account the 16 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and the school's record of parental surveys. He spoke with parents delivering their children to school. The inspector also considered the six responses to the questionnaire for staff.

Martin Spoor, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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