

Cold Aston Church of England Primary School

Cold Aston, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL54 3BN

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2015

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.

- This successful school lives up to its mission to ensure that all pupils 'Care, Aspire, Persevere, Succeed'. This means that all pupils flourish and grow as individuals who are highly valued and extremely well supported.
- The headteacher's uncompromising drive for excellence and high expectations are shared by all staff and governors. As a result, all aspects of the school's work have improved since the previous inspection.
- Middle leaders share the vision for continuous improvement in their areas of responsibility. Those who are new to their roles are rapidly developing the skills they need to check on the success of their actions.
- Staff are challenged and supported to improve all aspects of their work. Their efforts are greatly appreciated and staff morale is high.
- The governing body uses the wide range of its members' skills and experience very well to support and challenge leaders consistently and effectively.
- The curriculum provides pupils with an exciting range of subjects that are planned very effectively to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils feel extremely safe because the school's work to keep them safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. All pupils, including the most able, those who are supported by the pupil premium, the disabled and those who have special educational needs make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards by the end of Year 6 are high. In 2014, the average was over a year ahead of most Year 6 pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is never less than good and is frequently outstanding. Teaching is creative and challenging to all groups of pupils, stretching their abilities and making them think hard.
- Children in the early years make excellent progress from their different starting points. They develop their reading and writing skills very effectively and rapidly and are very well prepared for Year 1.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, all of which were seen together with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a number of other short visits to lessons and learning areas, and heard pupils in Years 2 and 6 reading.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, members of staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 10 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 26 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspector also took account of the school's own surveys and spoke to parents in the playground.
- The inspector looked at pupils' books and a range of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current attainment and progress, the school's evaluation of its performance and school improvement planning. She also looked at documentation relating to teachers' performance over time, and records relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Carol Warrant, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in four classes. There are single-aged classes for Reception children and Year 3 pupils. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught together in one class, as are pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6.
- Children in Reception attend full time.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is below average. Pupil premium is the additional funding from the government for some groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is a member of a local, small school, primary partnership.
- A number of pupils join and leave the school during Key Stage 2 to move into independent education.
- The school has experienced significant changes in staff in recent years.
- The school provides full time provision for children in Reception.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that middle leaders, new to role, develop the full range of skills they need to enable them to make the best use of checks in improving the quality of learning and the achievement of pupils.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The leadership and management are highly effective in driving improvement. The headteacher, other leaders and managers at all levels, and the governors make sure that staff work closely as a strong team. This has been particularly important with pupil mobility, as families move in and out of the local area or pupils transfer into schools in the independent sector.
- The school's evaluation of its work is accurate and leads to appropriate priorities for improvement.
- Morale is high because staff are clear about the part they play in the drive for continuous improvement and they are really appreciative of the support, guidance and encouragement they receive.
- Leaders ensure that rigorous monitoring of teaching has improved its quality and its impact on pupils' achievement. They use very effective systems to improve teachers' performance, setting objectives that are linked directly to pupils' achievement and professional development. This has resulted in high standards of teaching and attainment. Teachers fully understand the link between the effectiveness of their performance and any pay rises or promotion.
- Middle leaders are hugely enthusiastic and share the ambition for further improvement in their areas of responsibility. They have implemented the new National Curriculum very effectively and ensured that pupils continue to make excellent progress. Those who are new to role are rapidly developing the skills they need to check on the success of actions to improve the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils.
- The school's rich curriculum widens the experience of pupils and creates many opportunities for them to develop an understanding of their community and the wider world. For example, the curriculum and assemblies ensure that pupils are aware of the values and beliefs of other cultures. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively.
- The school places very strong emphasis on promoting equal opportunities for all its pupils. Pupils are tolerant and respectful. Discrimination does not occur, with school leaders and teachers expecting pupils to learn and play well together. Leaders and teachers assess the progress of each pupil rigorously and regularly. The pupil premium is used extremely well to ensure disadvantaged pupils attain the same standards as the others. Highly effective support is provided for children who are vulnerable or struggling with behaviour, emotions or social difficulties.
- For all pupils, any signs of underachievement are addressed effectively through appropriate teaching programmes, such as small-group or one-to-one adult support.
- The primary physical education and sport premium has been used exceptionally well, with the appointment of a specialist sports coach. Checks by staff show that pupils' fitness levels and well-being have improved, along with their participation in a wide range of sports clubs and very successful teams.
- The arrangements for safeguarding children are very effective and well understood by all staff. Staff are trained at appropriate intervals and thoroughly understand the requirements and procedures.
- The school works closely with the local authority and uses its expertise regularly and effectively. Staff benefit from training that is planned within the strong partnership of local small schools. This has resulted in improvements in many areas of the school's work, including the quality of teaching and pupil achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly effective in monitoring the school's performance. Governors use their skills and experience effectively to influence the school's work. They are very well informed about how well the school is performing through their regular visits and through checking data and reports from the headteacher and other leaders. They use this information effectively to hold the school to account for school improvement. They have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching in the school and the link between teachers' performance and salary progression. They help the school tackle any underperformance rigorously. They ensure that pupil-premium funding is used efficiently to support the pupils for whom it is intended, and they assess its impact on their achievement. Governors have undertaken training in safer recruitment and child protection and fulfill their statutory duties for safeguarding pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' eagerness to learn and their exceptionally strong relationships with staff contribute very well to their outstanding achievement. Pupils' love of school is reflected in their above-average attendance.
- Pupils are extremely polite and get on with staff and one another exceptionally well. They are calm and negotiate corridors and stairways with great care and consideration. Pupils persevere in their learning and are really keen to succeed. They are extremely welcoming to visitors and enthusiastically talked to the inspector about their pride in their school and excitement in learning. They know that staff take great care in getting to know them and their families well and this promotes very positive and happy learners. A typical pupil comment was, 'The teachers really care about us and want us to do our best all the time. I love this school.'
- Pupils play happily and safely and are thoughtful and considerate. They enjoy the many opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as being Head Girl or Head Boy, a school councillor or a 'Friendship Fixer' in the playground.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils have a very clear understanding of how to stay safe and keep others safe on the roads or when faced with strangers. They were particularly keen to tell the inspector about how to stay safe on the internet.
- Pupils have an excellent and mature understanding of the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and bullying as a result of prejudice. They say that bullying hardly ever happens, but if it did that they would tell an adult straight away and are very confident that staff would sort it out quickly and fairly.
- Parents' responses in Parent View, the school's own surveys and discussions with parents show they are unreservedly confident that their children feel safe and staff keep them safe.
- The parent support worker, together with the headteacher, has been extremely effective in ensuring that vulnerable pupils are given every support to minimise any negative impact on their learning and progress.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Staff know pupils exceptionally well as individuals and this helps them to develop highly positive relationships which encourage pupils to love learning and always try their best. A typical pupil comment was, 'Teachers always make learning fun. I like it best when we do really hard work.'
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. They use information from assessment very effectively to plan lessons that build successfully on what pupils have already learned. For example, in Year 3, pupils used their individual 'progress ladders' to make sure that their writing included all the features of an effective story based on a quest.
- Teaching assistants work closely and effectively with teachers in planning and teaching lessons. They are skilled in providing help and guidance for pupils who have special educational needs and those who are supported by the pupil premium.
- The most able pupils are appropriately challenged to reach their full potential. Teachers are very good at challenging the most able pupils with their learning and have consistently high expectations of them.
- Teachers extend pupils' learning, developing their thinking skills well and enabling them to apply their existing knowledge and skills. One of the ways they do this is by asking questions extremely effectively. This was seen in a mathematics lesson, where pupils in the mixed Years 4, 5 and 6 class worked enthusiastically. They were able to apply their knowledge and understanding of the characteristics of numbers to find code words which added up to prime numbers.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letter make) is outstanding. Pupils use this knowledge to make rapid progress in their reading skills through Key Stage 1. Pupils continue to develop excellent skills through Key Stage 2 as teaching ensures that they develop more demanding skills such as scanning the text to find information.
- Pupils are involved in checking each other's work and suggesting ways for further improvement. This fosters a very positive learning culture where pupils benefit from each other's ideas.
- Teachers consistently provide high-quality marking and guidance on how pupils should improve their work, and pupils respond quickly and positively to the advice they are given. This contributes considerably to pupils' outstanding progress.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Achievement has improved since the last inspection..At the end of Year 2 in 2014, standards were above the national average in reading and mathematics and broadly average in writing. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 were well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 5, and level 6 at the end of Year 6 in 2014 in English and mathematics was significantly above the national average. The success of the school's actions to improve progress and standards in writing across the school is reflected in the above-average proportions of pupils reaching higher levels.
- Work in pupils' books, and the school's own checks and inspection findings, clearly show that pupils currently in the school make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' knowledge of phonics (the sounds letters make) is secure.. Most Year 2 pupils read fluently by recognising whole words and sounding them out. Older pupils read widely and talk confidently and revealingly about their favourite authors and themes.
- Pupils develop a real love of mathematics, because of the whole-school focus on ensuring that they have a secure understanding of concepts and basic skills. This brings them much success and motivation. Pupils show increasing confidence tackling interesting and challenging problems in different ways. Such tasks stretch their thinking and ability to work with partners in applying their calculation skills.
- The extremely high expectations and high-quality teaching across the school mean that the most able pupils are provided with more challenging work to stretch their abilities as soon as they are ready. This is particularly evident in writing, where pupils are given very precise guidance on how to construct their work. They have highly stimulating opportunities to write which enables their writing to exhibit a mature development of ideas and skilled use of language.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress in all years from their different starting points. This is because they receive very effective support from skilled teachers and teaching assistants and through well-planned intervention programmes that fully meet their needs.
- Disadvantaged pupils, who are supported by the pupil premium, make the same outstanding progress as their classmates. This is because of the highly effective way they are supported by teachers and teaching assistants..

The early years provision is outstanding

- Children settle quickly thanks to the highly creative and supportive learning spaces and well-established routines. There are excellent links with parents through daily contact and information sessions.
- All children, including the most able, those with special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium, make outstanding progress from their different starting points. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development is above average. As a result, children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Staff have high expectations and an excellent knowledge of how children learn and develop. They grasp every opportunity to capture children's interests and extend their learning. High-quality teaching and very caring relationships help children to flourish as inquisitive learners and to feel safe.
- Staff make detailed observations of what children can achieve and their attitudes to learning in high-quality, individual 'Learning Profiles'. These are used to focus on the needs of individuals so that they get just the right kind of support and stimulus to succeed. This helps children to develop their early reading, writing and mathematical skills exceptionally well.
- Children's behaviour is outstanding. They settle quickly into their daily routines and form excellent relationships with adults and each other. They are polite to adults and work well together. Staff are particularly successful in creating a very caring and positive environment where children feel secure to ask questions and engage in their learning. Children's health, safety and well-being are always of utmost importance to staff. All the children are kept very safe and secure.
- The leadership of the early years is extremely strong. The new leader has a very clear understanding of strengths and areas for further development of the provision and shares the headteacher's uncompromising desire to improve the achievement of children continuously.

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	115609
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	448470

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	67
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne McNally
Headteacher	Alexandra Symondson
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 September 2009
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