

Monteclefe Church of England Academy

School Lane, Somerton, Somerset, TA11 7NL

Inspection dates

14–15 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils generally make good progress across the school and attainment is well above average when pupils leave the school in Year 6.
- Achievement in reading is good and is improving strongly as a result of a consistent teaching approach that enthuses and interests all pupils.
- The quality of teaching over time is good and teachers use questioning well to promote pupils' progress and understanding.
- The school's work in enhancing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a particular strength.
- Pupils show good attitudes to learning and want to succeed. They behave very well around the school and in lessons and say they feel safe in the school.
- There are excellent playground facilities which the pupils have a say in providing through the school council.
- The headteacher leads a cohesive team of staff who are united in their drive to improve pupils' progress and have maintained good standards of achievement.
- The governing body provides good support to the school and challenges the senior leaders when any aspect of the school's work is seen to be below expectations.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in writing is not as good as in reading and mathematics, particularly in Years 3 and 4, because pupils are not always given work at the right level of difficulty.
- Leaders and managers have not made sure that the marking and assessment of pupils' work is equally good in all classes.
- Some procedures for recording the infrequent incidents of poor behaviour are not rigorous enough so that patterns of behaviour may sometimes be missed.
- The school's self-evaluation is not detailed enough to generate clear priorities for future actions by leaders and managers.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons, six of which were joint observations with school leaders. In addition, inspectors made other short visits to lessons and to learning areas in the course of their observations of pupils' behaviour. They also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of the 28 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), two letters, and spoke informally to parents and carers as they brought pupils to school.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, governors, senior and middle leaders, and teaching staff.
- The information from 18 staff questionnaires was taken into consideration.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school, and looked at pupils' books and at a number of documents, including the school's own data and monitoring of how well pupils progress. They also checked planning documents, records of checks on the quality of teaching, and records of behaviour, attendance and punctuality, as well as documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Simon Blackburn, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Linda Rowley

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average size junior school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for looked-after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent or carer in the armed services) is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs.
- The large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- Monteclefe Church of England Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 August 2012. When its predecessor school, Monteclefe VA Church of England Junior School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of teaching that is consistently good or better by ensuring teachers:
 - share the best practice seen in the school and give pupils feedback on their work that provides clear, targeted actions to improve
 - encourage pupils through marking to respond to challenge and attempt more difficult work
 - plan work that is appropriate for pupils' different ability levels and takes into account what they have already learned.
- Improve school leadership by:
 - ensuring checks on the quality of teaching, and particularly marking, are rigorous enough to challenge differences in the ways teachers assess pupils' work
 - making sure that the school's self-evaluation provides greater detail of how the school is doing in all areas so that clear priorities for improvement can be identified and planned for
 - improving the way that the infrequent incidents of poor behaviour or bullying are recorded so that patterns can be analysed and actions planned to prevent further problems.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress across the school. The proportion of pupils making expected and better-than-expected progress in English and mathematics from Year 3 to Year 6 is higher than the national average. Attainment is well above average when pupils leave the school in Year 6.
- Progress in writing is not as good as in mathematics and reading in Years 3 and 4. This is because the tasks given to pupils are not always a good match to their ability levels. As a result of teachers sometimes giving all pupils the same work to do, pupils who are more able find it too easy while some find it difficult to start the work.
- All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those for whom the school receives pupil premium funding, are achieving well from their starting points.
- Pupil premium is used effectively to provide one-to-one tuition and small-group teaching in English and mathematics as well as additional nurture group support for eligible pupils. As a result, pupils supported in this way achieve as well as other children in the school and are about a year ahead of similar pupils nationally, as measured by average point scores, ensuring that all pupils have an equal opportunity to a good education.
- The school did not choose to enter any pupils for Level 6 tests in 2012 and, as a result, some higher attaining pupils made less progress than the national average. The school has addressed this with the current Year 6 and some pupils were seen to be working confidently towards Level 6 in mathematics and English.
- Pupils in all year groups and classes know their academic targets but they are less clear about how to reach them because the marking and assessment of their work do not always give them clear information about how they can improve their work to the next level.
- Achievement in reading is good and is improving strongly. The school uses an accelerated reading scheme which has had an impressive impact on the range of books that children read and on their fluency and accuracy.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching over time is good and is ensuring that pupils make good progress. Some of the best work that pupils do and enjoy is as a result of teachers planning activities that use the local area and environment as a strong stimulus for learning. For example, the work on cathedrals was of very high quality and followed a visit to Wells Cathedral.
- Lesson planning is detailed and gives pupils good learning opportunities. In the best lessons, careful account is taken of the different abilities of pupils and work is pitched at just the right level to challenge all the pupils, but this is not the case in all lessons. Some teachers give the same tasks to all pupils so that the most able do not find it demanding enough and make slower progress as a result.
- Teachers and teaching assistants generally work well together and it is clear that they plan lessons together so that all pupils make at least steady progress and most do better than this. Teaching assistants have an accurate view of the abilities of the pupils they support and encourage them to work independently.
- Teachers use questioning well to promote pupils' progress and understanding. They use a good range of questions that are often matched to the ability of the pupils and challenge their thinking. For example in an English lesson, both the teacher and the teaching assistant asked probing questions to help pupils improve the quality of their explanation writing.
- Pupils told the inspection team that they enjoy their learning, particularly when they are playing and active part. They also enjoy using the iPads that the school has made a significant

investment in.

- The school does not have a whole-school policy to inform teachers' marking. This means that the quality of marking and assessment is varied across the school so that some classes get a great deal of detail about how to improve their work and can move on quickly with their learning, while other classes receive only simple comments about their work without the extra help to reach the next level.
- The vast majority of parents and carers who responded using Parent View feel that their children are well taught and that they make good progress. Pupils agreed in conversation with inspectors. They think learning is fun and they usually feel challenged by the work they are given to do.
- The school takes every opportunity to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and work in this area is a particular strength, promoting good relations and tackling discrimination. Class collective worship is a special time in the day where pupils get the opportunity to reflect and think about important issues and questions and this is very well led by teachers who involve all pupils and are highly effective in promoting personal development.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy coming to school in this warm, friendly and welcoming environment. They say they feel safe and enjoy playing with their friends at playtime and lunchtime. There are excellent playground facilities which the pupils have helped to improve through the work of the school council.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils are considerate and polite towards each other and to adults. The house point system is effective at promoting good behaviour and the pupils see this as fair and positive.
- Attitudes to learning are positive and pupils want to do well. Sometimes, teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning with open-ended, problem-solving tasks which allow greater decision making and risk taking.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are particularly effective in dealing with a small number of pupils with challenging behaviour and have good strategies to keep them on task during lessons.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying and are aware of how to keep themselves safe. They say that bullying is rare and that the school deals with it quickly. The school does not maintain any central records of bullying or behaviour incidents and so does not have the ability to analyse patterns in behaviour.
- Attendance is above average and has been for a number of years.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and his staff have maintained levels of attainment well above the national average and have a strong drive to improve pupils' progress. The staff questionnaire shows how the staff respect the leaders and share their vision for the school's improvement.
- Regular and effective checks are carried out on the quality of teaching and lead to constructive professional discussions and training to improve teaching but the school does not record all its checking activities systematically. It is trying out an online system with the laudable aim of giving school governors access to all the information as it becomes available, but the records are incomplete and lacking in detail.
- School self-evaluation is largely accurate and the key issues for improvement identified in the school improvement plan are appropriate. However, the key issues are not derived directly from the self-evaluation because it is not detailed enough in its judgements about all the aspects of

school performance. Consequently, while leaders can talk knowledgeably about the improvements being made, and achievement is good, there is less precision in measuring the impact on pupils' achievement.

- The management of teachers' performance is well organised and is used well to support the school's overall drive for improvement. It provides clear targets for improvement and ensures that teachers only progress on salary scales when their pupils achieve well.
- The curriculum provides a rich range of experiences for pupils which interest and engage them. The school is currently reflecting on and reviewing the way it teaches subjects to make sure that it provides the best possible learning opportunities that pupils find relevant to their lives. The school is leading on developments to use tablet computers in lessons and the pupils develop skills quickly as a result.
- The range of activities that pupils take part in outside lessons is very wide. They enjoy a host of musical, sporting and cultural clubs that continue late into the evening. The school takes every opportunity to enrich the subjects pupils learn; for example, when the Olympic torch came through the town early in the day the whole school greeted it with the samba band and Morris dancers.
- The school is developing its partnerships well. It is part of a local grouping of schools that work effectively together to provide high-quality training for teachers and other adults as well as challenge and support for school leaders.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet current government requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. The governing body provides good support to the school and challenges the senior leaders when any aspects of the school's work are seen to be below expectations. Governors know how the school is doing because they have a good understanding of the information on pupils' progress presented to them. They are at the early stages of collecting or requiring evidence to inform their work and currently rely too heavily on the headteacher and other leaders for information. Governors do not play an active enough role in evaluating the work of the school in the self-evaluation process. They have a general understanding about how teachers' pay and performance are linked and ensure that pay increases are justified. Governors have a good understanding of the financial situation of the school and know that the extra funds to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium are spent effectively so that these pupils are achieving as well as or better than others. Governors undertake regular training to ensure they understand educational priorities and maintain their skills.

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	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. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	138541
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	408777

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	153
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Speed
Headteacher	David Norton
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Fax number	01458 274498
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