

# Courtney Primary School

Courtney Road, Kingswood, Bristol BS15 9RD

## Inspection dates

30 April–1 May 2019

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 headteacher is well supported by the new deputy headteacher and has high expectations of pupils and teachers. Together they provide determined and effective leadership.
- Senior leaders have taken resolute action to rectify concerns identified in the previous inspection. They have raised expectations and brought about significant improvement to secure good teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governors provide strong levels of challenge to staff leaders and help them to identify and address the right priorities for improvement.
- The school's senior and middle leadership teams make effective contributions to the improvement of teaching and learning. However, some are new to their responsibilities and have yet to make a full impact.
- All staff implement rigorous safeguarding procedures and promote supportive relationships with the pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy school and feel safe.
- The curriculum is well planned to promote the school motto, 'Nurture, Inspire, Flourish'. Teachers plan exciting learning activities for pupils. However, some teachers do not develop the pupils' mathematical skills sufficiently across the wider curriculum.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. They receive effective support that is much appreciated by parents.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and work happily and supportively together. They are very proud of their school.
- Pupils make strong progress in a range of subjects, including in phonics, writing and science.
- New approaches to the teaching of reading and mathematics are improving pupils' progress, especially that of the most able pupils. However, some lower attainers and disadvantaged pupils are not sufficiently developing their numeracy skills and their breadth and understanding of vocabulary.
- Children get off to a good start and settle confidently into school routines in the early years. They thrive because of the good teaching and high-quality care they receive.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Sustain the focus on improving pupils' reading and mathematics, particularly the skills of lower-attaining and disadvantaged pupils, by teachers:
  - widening and deepening pupils' vocabulary and comprehension skills
  - improving pupils' knowledge and fluent use of number facts
  - further developing pupils' mathematical skills across the range of subjects.
- Strengthen the roles and skills of middle leaders so they can contribute even more effectively to raising standards and developing the curriculum in their areas of subject responsibility across the school.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher is strongly supported by the deputy headteacher and governors. With the backing of staff, leaders sustain an unwavering and effective commitment to raising pupils' personal development as well as academic achievement.
- Leaders have a sharp understanding of the school's current effectiveness and improvement priorities. They are implementing ambitious, well-focused plans for improvement. Senior leaders and, increasingly, middle leaders are continually monitoring and evaluating them to secure the desired outcomes. This action represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection. As a result, pupils are making good progress across the school in response to good teaching.
- Leaders have welcomed and responded diligently to local authority guidance and challenge. This work has helped the school to secure its own strong capacity to drive improvement during a period of staff changes. This is evident for example in the way previous weaknesses in pupils' behaviour, writing and science have been transformed into relative strengths. All the parents who spoke with an inspector, and most of those who responded to the online survey, acknowledge this improvement. A small minority of parents expressed concerns about changes in staff. The typical picture, however, was represented by a parent who wrote, 'Courtney Primary School has come on leaps and bounds over the past year.'
- Some middle leaders are either new to the school or new to their roles and are collaborating with colleagues to build effective teams. This is strengthening the focus on improving teaching and learning, but the new teams have not been in post long enough to have the best impact in all subjects.
- Leaders have sharpened their analysis of the use of additional funding. They ensure that pupils with SEND receive effective additional adult support. This is provided both within and outside classrooms to ensure that these pupils also benefit from the same quality of teaching as their classmates. Disadvantaged pupils similarly gain from extra adult support for their personal and emotional well-being as well as their academic needs. As a result, current pupils are increasingly overcoming barriers to their learning.
- Leaders sustain an unwavering commitment to helping all pupils achieve equally well. They have recognised that pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics has been weaker than in writing, particularly at the end of Year 6. They are now tackling this with increasing rigour and are improving pupils' progress through the school.
- Leaders implement a broad, stimulating curriculum, which includes a range of experiences to enthuse pupils in learning. Leaders work in curriculum teams to make sure that topics and activities match pupils' interests and progressively develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils' good learning in science and interesting learning in the school's garden and pond areas typify the school's diligence in sustaining a meaningful curriculum.
- School assembly themes, such as the importance of mutual respect, strongly promote pupils' personal qualities. The pupils' understanding and genuine concern for each other was clearly evident as they warmly sang 'I'll sail the world to find you.' The

school emphasises interpersonal qualities such as appropriate assertiveness within the school's 'Courtney Crown Values' and this promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. By the time they leave the school, pupils understand fundamental British values such as democracy and tolerance and are well prepared for the wider world.

- The school's recognition as a 'Change4Life' school reflects its much improved and now strong physical education (PE) curriculum. This is enriched by the leaders' exemplary use of the sport premium. They provide many, varied opportunities for pupils to engage in physical activity and develop healthy lifestyles, including in competitive sports as individuals and in teams. Currently, for example, there are 13 very well-attended after-school sports clubs, with 27 pupils already attending a new running club.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors share the headteacher's unwavering ambition for the school and fulfil their statutory duties effectively. They are diligent in monitoring safeguarding procedures and supporting staff to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Governors work closely with staff leaders at all levels and know the school well. They have responded productively to external reviews and guidance from the local authority so as to improve the way they check the work of the school. Minutes of their meetings and visits to the school show their strengthened ability to question senior leaders to ensure that priorities identified for improvement are achieved.
- Governors work alongside subject leaders in curriculum teams to ensure that planned topics and activities enthuse pupils and progressively deepen their learning. Governors hold senior staff leaders to account for spending of additional funding to good effect, for example in the use of the sports premium. Currently, governors are carefully monitoring and supporting teachers' efforts to improve the progress of some disadvantaged pupils further in reading and mathematics.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. A fully shared culture of safeguarding and well-being lies at the heart of day-to-day life of the school. Leaders, including the school's business manager, implement well-formulated procedures when appointing staff. Their vigilant and regular checks make sure that any adult working with pupils is suitable to do so.
- Leaders ensure that staff training in safeguarding, for example in the 'Prevent' duty to protect pupils from extremism and radicalisation, is kept up to date. Consequently, staff know what to do should they have any concerns about pupils' safety. Leaders liaise well with other agencies and with parents to ensure that pupils and their families receive the support they need. Safeguarding records are of a high quality and include a careful check of the concerns raised and of the impact of actions taken both at school and at home. Risk assessments, for example to ensure pupils' safety when working in the pond area and during trips out of school, are kept up to date and are well understood and adhered to by staff.

- Almost all the parents, and all the staff, who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaires, expressed the view that the school keeps their children safe. The vast majority of pupils who responded in their questionnaire indicated that they feel safe and well looked after at school. All the pupils questioned by the inspectors expressed these views and knowledgeably described how they try to keep each other safe, for example when using computers.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Leaders have made good use of training, as well as expertise within the school, to improve the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. After a challenging period of staff change, teachers acknowledge the work and support of senior leaders in driving improvement. Teachers now confidently demonstrate raised and more consistent expectations of pupils' learning, including for the most able pupils.
- Improved teaching, now evident across all key stages, is typified by accurate assessment of pupils' starting points and developing skills. These are now used well to plan the next steps in pupils' learning and promote good progress. This is enabling teachers and their well-informed teaching assistants to strengthen the way they help pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, to catch up from slowed learning in the past. Questioning is used well to check and then deepen pupils' understanding, including for the most able. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to give clear explanations, which helps pupils settle quickly to their work.
- Significant improvements in teaching are especially notable in the teaching of writing. This is underpinned by the highly successful development of handwriting, from the moment children enter the school in Reception. This enables pupils to write fluently and expressively about the stimulating texts and topics across the range of subjects. For example, pupils in Year 2 sensitively retold Islamic stories. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed good depth in their thinking when describing how they designed and built model cars.
- Skills in phonics are taught well across the school. This is evident over time in the above-average proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in key stage 1 phonics screening checks. In recent years, pupils' performance in other reading assessments has been less successful. To raise standards, leaders have reviewed and improved the way teaching encourages and develops pupils' reading. For example, teachers ensure that the books presented to pupils, both at school and those taken home, are more precisely matched to their interests and reading ability. Pupils are responding positively and show interest and enjoyment in reading. However, this strengthened teaching of reading has not been in place long enough to raise the vocabulary and comprehension skills of low-attaining and disadvantaged pupils sufficiently.
- Teachers are sustaining an improved emphasis on deepening pupils' understanding of reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics. As in reading, this is helping to raise standards and increase the number of pupils working at greater depth. Pupils respond well when challenged by adults to first read and consider the nature of the mathematical problems presented to them and then check their understanding by explaining their ideas. This is helping pupils to learn better for themselves by understanding what they did well and how they can improve their work. However,

teaching does not yet fully develop pupils' ability to recall number facts fluently and accurately and this constrains the progress of some pupils.

- Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils with SEND effectively. Staff assess and meet pupils' academic learning and emotional development to equal effect, for example by providing speech and language therapy as necessary, or supporting their attendance. Staff and other pupils value their contributions and fully include them in all activities.
- The teaching of science is much improved and is typified by well-planned practical investigations, which progressively develop pupils' scientific enquiry skills. Teachers develop meaningful opportunities for pupils to extend their mathematical skills in their science work. For example, pupils in Year 5 compiled graphs of different gestation periods when investigating mammals. However, the pupils' mathematical skills are not developed well enough across other subjects; for example, map work in geography is rarely supported by reference to scale.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Most pupils, encouraged by staff and in response to their well-modelled care and respect, develop into motivated learners. On occasion the attention span of a small number of pupils slips during whole-class discussions and their progress slows. Even so, over time, the strong relationships established between pupils and adults, and among pupils themselves, promote good personal qualities and academic progress.
- Pupils say they are well looked after and treated equally by adults. They appreciate the way their efforts are welcomed and valued. Pupils take pride in their work and, in response to the teachers' consistently high expectations, present their work in books very carefully and neatly. This is clearly evident in their beautiful handwriting, which is a notable strength of the school.
- The school's wide range of sporting activities makes a strong contribution to the pupils' understanding of teamwork. Pupils willingly undertake a range of responsibilities and take them seriously. For example, pupils fulfil duties such as being a school councillor or play-leader during breaktimes.
- The school has a strong community atmosphere, which promotes pupils' enjoyment in learning and appreciation of the efforts of others. Several parents acknowledged this atmosphere in their questionnaire responses. Typically, one parent wrote, 'Courtney Primary School benefits from a lovely small school setting – it's got a real sense of community and is very supportive.' Pupils talk with understanding about the Courtney core values, which link closely with British values. They say, 'We are assertive, but still kind to each other.'

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' good behaviour in and out of lessons is characterised by mutual respect and a real interest in each other's ideas. Typically, pupils are well mannered and friendly. From a very early age most pupils move

sensibly around the school and settle quickly to work without any fuss. When interviewed, pupils say they show kindness and consideration to each other, including in the breakfast and after-school clubs.

- Pupils and staff both talk very positively about pupils' improved behaviour in recent years. They reported that, at times, a small number of pupils need and receive close adult help with their emotional and behavioural needs. This is evident in the school records, which also show a reduced incidence of more serious misbehaviour and lessening need for fixed-term exclusions. Several parents who spoke to an inspector also made reference to the more consistent implementation of the school's updated behaviour policy, which has raised pupils' expectations and improved their behaviour.
- When questioned, pupils unanimously and confidently stated that they feel safe. They said, 'We get loads of support from our teachers,' and that they would trust a member of staff to help them if they had any problems. Pupils know about bullying and its different forms and said, 'We had a problem with bullying, but it got sorted out.' Pupils talked knowledgeably about how to stay safe when using computers. School records show that the school has taken rigorous action to protect pupils when online bullying has taken place out of school.
- Leaders take effective action to sustain the above-average rate of pupils' attendance, which also reflects pupils' enjoyment of school. Staff work supportively with parents and outside agencies to ensure that any barriers to pupils' good attendance are reduced.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Good

- Good teaching, particularly across this academic year, has led to pupils' good progress. Pupils' responses in class and their work in books show continuing strong progress in writing, from the moment they enter school in Reception and continuing through key stages 1 and 2.
- The pupils develop exemplary handwriting skills and develop their spelling, punctuation and grammar skills well as they move through the school. All teachers provide stimulating opportunities for pupils to use and advance their writing across the range of subjects. For example, in science, pupils in Year 6 write accurately about the circulatory system of the human body.
- Pupils' responses also show better progress in reading and mathematics than in previous years, especially the most able pupils. Pupils' outcomes in phonics continue the trend of above-average performance in the Year 1 screening checks. In recent years, pupils' reading outcomes have not matched this level of performance. However, teachers' assessments of pupils' current reading skills now reveal rising standards in response to the greater emphasis placed on developing pupils' reading at school and at home. The accuracy of these assessments was evidenced during the inspection as they read from books and from their work, for the inspectors. When questioned, pupils were quick to talk about the characters and events in the interesting texts and books available to them. However, the limited vocabulary and comprehension skills of some disadvantaged and lower-attaining pupils still impede their ability to read new words confidently and accurately.



- Pupils are now making good progress in mathematics, especially in their ability to reason and solve problems. Currently, particularly across key stage 2, more pupils are demonstrating skills that match those expected for their age than were evident in previous national assessments at the end of Year 6. In response to improved teaching and raised levels of challenge set by the teachers an increased number of the most able pupils are also working at greater depth. This is evident in their well-presented work in books and in their detailed explanations in class. However, some lower-ability and disadvantaged pupils still lack the ability to recall basic number facts fluently and this limits their achievement.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress in relation to their needs and starting points. They benefit from bespoke individual progress plans and additional adult assistance. A sizeable proportion of the small number of disadvantaged pupils within each year group also have SEND. They too benefit from the school's improved use of additional funding. As a result, remaining differences between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of their peers are diminishing across the school.
- Pupils make good progress in science across both key stages 1 and 2. Their scientific knowledge and their interest and ability to undertake scientific enquiry are well developed across all aspects of the science curriculum. Teaching in PE enthuses the pupils and encourages their whole-hearted participation, leading to strong learning and good understanding of healthy lifestyles.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- In response to consistently good teaching, an increasing number of children from a typical range of starting points, make good progress across most areas of learning. In particular, all children, including those with SEND, and disadvantaged children, develop confidence and self-learning skills successfully. Children with most ability also make good progress and respond eagerly to the teachers' probing questions, which deepen their understanding. Children are well prepared for future learning on entry to Year 1.
- This academic year, effective new leadership and the sharing of teaching roles in early years have complemented the improvements made after the previous inspection well. Improvements include strengthened assessment procedures and widened physical and practical learning experiences for the pupils. For example, children ride mini-bikes and search for mini-beasts. Indoor learning opportunities, for example in the 'Estimation Station' and 'Garden Centre', are equally effective in enthusing children in their learning. As a result, children behave and cooperate well to aid each other's learning. They happily share ideas and successfully extend their language skills and advance their understanding of number up to, and often above, 20.
- Parents who spoke to an inspector, and most who responded to the online questionnaire, praised their close relationships with staff and welcomed and acknowledged their children's good progress and enjoyment of school. One parent typically echoed the views of others when writing: 'Although our daughter only started in Reception in September, she is very happy, and we have nothing but good things to say about her/our experience with the school so far. Staff are very friendly and helpful, there are lots of opportunities to become involved and there are regular updates on progress and school news.'



- The staff implement safeguarding and welfare arrangements that fully meet requirements and keep children safe. The leader of early years has an accurate view of the strengths of the provision and where further improvement is needed to ensure all children make even better progress. Staff work well together as a team. The teachers and support assistant share their wide experience and have made good use of training opportunities provided by the local authority to develop their skills further. This has helped them to improve the way they plan relevant next steps to support their learning. The teachers' sharp targeting of the children's early writing and skills in number and phonics is strongly raising standards. The leader of early years has clear goals and carefully considered plans to sustain this continuing improvement.

## School details

Unique reference number	109054
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10088286

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Hinchliffe
Headteacher	Deborah Wood
Telephone number	01454 866 670
Website	<a href="http://www.courtneyprimaryschool.co.uk">www.courtneyprimaryschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@courtneyps.org.uk">office@courtneyps.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	24–25 January 2017

## Information about this school

- Courtney Primary School is broadly average in size.
- The majority of the pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than the national level. The percentage of pupils with SEND is broadly average. The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is broadly in line with national average.
- The school population is relatively stable, with the proportions of pupils who move in or out of the school matching those found nationally.
- The governing body manages a breakfast club and after-school care.
- Children experience early years provision full time in a Reception class.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 24 lessons and learning activities and saw the work of nine teachers.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher accompanied the inspectors during most of these visits to lessons.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures and the school's self-evaluation.
- The inspection team examined the school's systems for checking progress and records of checks on the quality of teaching.
- The inspectors talked with individual pupils during lessons and breaktimes about the school and their work. The team inspector listened to individual pupils reading. The team inspector also interviewed a representative group of pupils. The lead inspector attended the school assembly. The inspectors, joined by school leaders, looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects and classes.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and other representatives of the governing body and also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders and with a representative group of other staff. Inspectors also spoke informally with other teachers, teaching assistants and support staff.
- The inspectors examined the views expressed in 66 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, and in 42 parents' additional written comments. The inspectors gathered the views of several parents as they brought their children to the school.
- Inspectors gathered the views of 22 members of staff in questionnaires and the views of pupils expressed in 66 questionnaires.

## Inspection team

- |                                    |                    |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| ■ Alexander Baxter, lead inspector | ■ Ofsted Inspector |
| ■ Wendy Hanrahan                   | ■ Ofsted Inspector |

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