

St James Church of England Primary School

Moorgreen Road, West End, Southampton, SO30 3EG

Inspection dates 22–23 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Pupils' progress from their different starting points is not good especially in mathematics. Attainment in mathematics has declined and is well below national averages.
- Teaching over time has not been good enough to ensure the progress pupils make is fast enough.
- The information held by teachers is not used effectively to plan activities that are sufficiently matched to the abilities of all of their pupils to ensure their work is not too easy or too hard.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their skills in mathematics and apply them in other subject areas.
- Marking does not consistently provide clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work or give them the opportunity to make the changes the teachers identify.
- The middle leaders are still developing their skills in checking the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make. As a result their work has yet to have a significant impact on the outcomes for pupils.

The school has the following strengths:

- The headteacher has identified the key areas that require improvement and has worked to improve the quality of teaching. Inadequate teaching, which was too common, has been eliminated by the headteacher.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is good and pupils feel safe and well looked after by the adults who work with them.
- The governing body is very strong and provides both challenge and support to the school in its efforts to improve pupils' outcomes.
- The school has worked very effectively with the local authority to develop rigorous development plans to improve the quality of teaching, the outcomes for pupils and the skills within the leadership team.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons, two of which were jointly observed with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed two school assemblies.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and the chair of the personnel and curriculum committees as well as senior and middle leaders and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and scrutinised samples of pupils' workbooks.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documents, including the school's information on pupils' recent progress, as well as planning and documentation about checks on teaching, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors also took account of 82 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and one letter from a parent or carer. During the inspection, the school held an open morning for parents and carers to view the work of the school and take part in lessons alongside their children. Comments and views from a sample of the over 200 parents and carers who visited the school were also noted. They also took account of the views of staff through the 18 staff questionnaires completed.

Inspection team

David Hogg, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jan Edwards

Additional Inspector

Anthony Green

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St James Church of England Primary School is a larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through 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 much lower than the national average. Currently there are no looked after children in the school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic backgrounds other than White British is much lower than average and of these the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very low.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards for attainment and progress expected by the government.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and secure good progress for pupils by:
 - ensuring that the information teachers have is used more effectively to match learning activities to the abilities of less able pupils so they are better supported and the more able are stretched in order that both groups are able to learn more quickly
 - developing the quality of marking so pupils are given clear guidance on how to improve their work and then giving pupils more opportunities to respond to that feedback promptly
 - giving pupils increased opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in more real world practical activities in other subject areas.
- Develop the middle leadership team so it can take on greater responsibilities in checking the progress pupils make and in reviewing the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement as progress over time has not been good. In the past the school did not effectively track the progress the pupils made as they moved through the school. The current leadership team now has robust systems in place to check pupils' outcomes and the school's own information indicates that progress is now at least in line with national expectations but remains variable between year groups.
- Pupils enter the Reception classes with skills that are generally typical for their age. Pupils make expected progress or a little better in literacy and have appropriate skills to move on into Year 1. The lead teacher is relatively new to the school and has not been in a position to develop the reception phase sufficiently to have had a significant impact on the outcomes of the pupils.
- Progress in English and especially mathematics has been too slow because of the quality of teaching not being strong enough. Activities have not been matched precisely to the abilities of different groups of pupils and weaknesses in the mathematics curriculum have not secured good outcomes for pupils. The senior leadership team has worked to address these problems which pre-date the arrival of the headteacher. The school's own information suggests outcomes for pupils are now improving.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve similarly to those in other schools.
- Improvements in small-group work and targeted one-to-one sessions to support pupils eligible to receive additional funding from the pupil premium grant are beginning to be effective in closing gaps in attainment. Gaps in Year 6 attainment are now quite narrow in English, one term behind, but the gap in mathematics is three terms.
- The small number of pupils from ethnic minorities is small and individually pupils achieve similarly other pupils.
- Pupils' reading skills are generally in line with expectations at Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils can blend letter sounds to read unfamiliar words and by Year 6 read quite fluently. However, pupils' reading records do not provide guidance for parents and carers on how to support and develop the learning skills of their children and do not provide clear targets for pupils to practise to get better.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning over time has been too variable. The school has had to work hard to raise the standards of teaching, much of which for too long had been inadequate. The school's own data, supported by the reviews from the local authority, indicate a much better picture currently. However these improvements are only beginning to have an impact on pupils' outcomes, especially in mathematics, as pupils have been left with too many gaps in their understanding.
- The progress of pupils is checked carefully by the school. Regular progress meetings with class teachers and senior leaders identify those pupils who are making slow progress and additional work can then be targeted to support them.
- Staff have a good understanding of the levels pupils have achieved, however, they do not consistently use this to plan activities that are not too hard or too easy. Learning activities are not always matched to the abilities of the pupils, with the result that higher-ability pupils are not sufficiently challenged and work for lower-ability learners, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs when they are not being supported by adults, is not as well structured as it could be. As a result both groups do not make sufficient progress in lessons.
- Pupils have some understanding of their personal targets especially in English. They are aware of how to improve their work but this is not consistent across different subjects. Pupils' work is

marked and the quality of feedback teachers provide is improving in some classes. In these classes pupils are given guidance on how to improve their work and some opportunities to make the improvements quickly. However, marking is not consistently being used to accelerate learning.

- Opportunities to teach literacy skills across different subject areas are well established with extended pieces of writing seen in science and history books. Mathematics is not taught as well through other subjects. Pupils are not given the opportunities to practise their skills in different situations and are not given sufficient opportunities to apply their mathematics knowledge in practical and real world situations.
- The school uses a range of activities to engage and motivate the pupils. In Year 6 a visitor who grew up during the Southampton Blitz inspired pupils to imagine how they would feel.
- The teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) in the Reception classes and in Year 1 is well structured with the teacher using of a range of activities that both allow pupils to practise their understanding and enable the teacher to assess the understanding of the pupils. Although the less able pupils were effectively supported by the teaching assistants, the activities did not stretch the more able learners.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The pupils feel safe and well looked after at school. They say there is very little unkindness between pupils, and the adults around them help them if any problems do occur. The school works with the pupils to raise their aware of safety issues such as stranger danger and road safety through assemblies, lessons and visiting speakers. Pupils are knowledgeable about careful use of the internet. Parents and carers also feel their children are safe at school.
- In class pupils generally demonstrate good behaviour and engage well with the activities. When teaching is not as effective some pupils can drift off task or be passive in their learning, however, when teaching is good or better pupils demonstrate they can work independently of the adults around them and think deeply about their work. Pupils in the Year 2 classes used a range of interactive resources including laptops and the interactive whiteboard to explore the differences between the Victorian seaside and now.
- Around school pupils behave well. During the inspection many parents and carers visited and took part in the lessons across all year groups. Pupils were not silly and remained focused on their work and encouraged their parents and carers to join in.
- Attendance is a little above the national average and the school works hard to maintain this or improve upon it. There are very few persistent absentees.
- There is a wide range of clubs and activities available to pupils such as dance and karate while the in-house film club is popular and pupils are learning to become bloggers.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because some of the actions leaders have taken have yet to have time to bring about the changes to the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes in order for them to be good. The impact of some of the current middle leaders is yet to be seen in terms of raising pupils' outcomes. This is due to them being new to their roles or not having been able to review the quality of teaching and learning in their subject areas because of the need to raise achievement in certain year groups. Consequently they have not been able to have the overview of their subject areas across the school that would accelerate pupils' progress more quickly.
- The headteacher, supported by her deputy, has provided clear leadership and moved the school forwards. The quality of teaching over time has improved and inadequate teaching has been

eliminated. Through the school's work with the local authority, improvement plans are sharper and identify clearly the areas to develop and how that improvement will be monitored. The assistance from the local authority has been effective in helping the school leaders improve the school.

- The staff now overwhelmingly support the developments that the headteacher has led. They have a clear understanding of the areas that require further improvement. Teachers and teaching assistants have targets for the management of their performance and training linked to school development and the raising of outcomes for pupils.
- The school curriculum has been reviewed by school leaders and they have made sure aspects are now stronger. The school curriculum does provide opportunities that widen pupils' experiences and its ethos of cooperation, care and consideration underpins the development of the social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness of its pupils.
- The school looks to support pupils from different situations and backgrounds to ensure they are able to achieve all they can and ensures there is no discrimination. It seeks expertise from outside agencies to secure additional support when necessary.
- Parents and carers generally have a positive view of the school and how it looks after their children. A number of responses through Parent View identified the communication between the school and home as an aspect that could be improved upon, however discussions with some of those attending the open morning suggest that this is not a major concern and this was supported by a recent survey carried out by the governing body.
- There has been a drive from school leaders to improve the quality of teaching and learning at the school and as a result the outcomes for pupils. It has been a challenge that the headteacher and her deputy have borne at times on their own but through the eradication of inadequate teaching and effective training to raise the skills of the teachers there is now a more cohesive team that now supports the developments the headteacher has made. St James has a clear capacity to improve.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is very strong. Governors have been included in the progress and monitoring meetings that the school has held with the local authority. As a result they have a very clear understanding of the strengths of the school, the areas that require development and how far the school has improved. The governing body draws from a wide range of backgrounds and the skills governors bring to the school mean they have a good understanding of the progress information the school holds on pupils and how the school compares to others nationally, a good awareness of the quality of teaching and they ensure the financial position of the school is secure. The governors check the progress of those pupils in receipt of additional support through the pupil premium grant to review how effectively the school is using this funding. Governors have used training from the local authority to improve their skills and understanding of their role. Safeguarding arrangements are monitored carefully as are the school's arrangements for performance management. Governors have a good understanding of the link between staff salary progression and the outcomes for pupils. The governors do hold the school to account for the progress the pupils are making but alongside that they provide support for the senior leaders in their efforts to improve the school.

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	116331
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	405640

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	404
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Wiseman
Headteacher	Harrie Macarte
Date of previous school inspection	28–29 June 2011
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