

# St James Church of England Junior School

Upton Street, Gloucester, GL1 4JU

**Inspection dates** 19–20 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Pupils' achievement is inadequate because too many do not make the progress of which they are capable, especially in writing.
- There are gaps in achievement between different groups of pupils. For example, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are not given the specific extra help they need to make better progress.
- Many teachers do not stretch pupils enough, especially the more able, so their progress is too slow.
- Teachers do not give pupils enough time to write at length or to respond to their marking. They do not show pupils clearly enough the steps they need to take to produce their best work.
- Senior leaders have not tracked pupils' progress with enough rigour to enable them to know how well pupils are doing. They have not checked the quality of teaching closely enough to help teachers to improve their work.
- Since the previous inspection pupils' rates of progress have declined. Senior leaders have not done enough to deal with the areas identified for improvement at the last inspection.
- The leaders' judgements of the school's effectiveness are generous. Targets in improvement plans lack precision and their impact is not checked closely enough.
- Until recently governors did not have a clear enough view of the school's performance to enable them to challenge the school's leaders about why pupils are not making better progress.

### The school has the following strengths:

- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are well mannered and concentrate hard in lessons. They say they are well cared for, feel safe and enjoy school.
- The new headteacher has gained the trust of staff and parents and carers and is beginning to take actions to raise attainment and improve teaching.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 12 lessons of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the chair of governors and two other members of the governing body, the headteacher and the school’s senior staff. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, to consider the results. Inspectors took account of the views of the parents and carers they consulted informally during the two days.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work, and looked at a range of documents including the school’s improvement plans, data on pupils’ current progress, teachers’ planning, records from the school’s monitoring of its work, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to special educational needs, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspectors heard pupils read, talked to them in lessons and evaluated samples of their work.
- During the first morning of the inspection, all pupils were involved in a sports event away from the school site.

## Inspection team

Sandra Woodman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Williams	Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.*

### Information about this school

- This junior school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in the care of the local authority and children with a parent in the armed forces) is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The current headteacher took up the interim post in April 2013.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is good or better by ensuring teachers:
  - plan learning activities that make pupils of all abilities think hard, especially the more able
  - provide effective support for those pupils who need specific extra help, especially those with special educational needs
  - do not talk for too long and allow pupils to start their work promptly so they can find things out for themselves
  - explain to pupils what they need to do to be successful in lessons and in order to produce their best work.
- Improve pupils' achievement, especially in writing, by:
  - providing more opportunities to for pupils to write at length in order to practise and extend their writing skills
  - making sure teachers demonstrate to pupils what they need to do to develop their writing skills
  - teaching pupils higher-level reading skills such as inference and deduction
  - giving pupils sufficient opportunities to respond to their marking and make the necessary improvements to their work.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that improvement plans have precise targets for pupils' progress and for improving the quality of teaching, and that they are implemented effectively and checked regularly
  - setting clear expectations and guidance for teachers about what is expected in lessons and checking robustly that they are being followed
  - establishing an efficient and effective system for tracking the attainment and progress of pupils
  - carrying out an external review of governance in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved
  - developing the skills and knowledge of the governing body to enable governors to check the school's work for themselves more effectively.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- Pupils do not make enough progress during their time in the school in all subjects but especially in writing. In 2012, the proportions of pupils making the progress that is expected from their starting points were lower than those found nationally. In writing over half of the pupils did not make the progress that is expected. Lesson observations and pupils' work show that too many pupils currently in the school are making slow progress. While some pupils are making better progress in writing this is not sufficiently widespread to help all pupils make up lost ground.
- Pupils enter the school in Year 3 with attainment that ranges from broadly average to well above average. In 2012, the results of national tests and assessments showed that pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 was below average overall. Attainment in mathematics is declining and is below expectations in most year groups. Attainment in English has also declined over the last two years and standards in writing are low. Too many pupils are not reaching the standards of which they are capable.
- In 2012, gaps in attainment between Year 6 pupils who were supported through the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, and their peers narrowed significantly and they reached similar levels to their classmates in both English and mathematics. However, standards are too low for all pupils in writing, including those eligible for support through the pupil premium. The school has not analysed the attainment and progress of pupils currently in the school who are eligible for support through the pupil premium.
- One reason standards are too low in writing is that pupils do not have enough opportunities to write regularly and at length to practise and extend their skills. The teaching of writing is starting to improve but still teachers do not always show pupils how to develop their writing skills precisely enough.
- Often more-able pupils do tasks that are too easy and they do not have the chance to extend their thinking by finding things out for themselves. Too often pupils are not given clear enough guidance on how to be successful in lessons and so do not produce their best work.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are not doing as well as they should. The school is effective in helping pupils with behavioural and emotional needs to be included in lessons. However, the support for their learning is not well organised or targeted precisely enough to help them make better progress. These shortcomings mean that these pupils are not making as much progress as their classmates.
- Pupils say they enjoy reading and read extensively across a range of popular authors. The quality of learning in reading lessons is not good enough. Pupils are not taught to develop the higher reading skills, such as the ability to understand what the text implies, in order to become better readers.

### The quality of teaching

### is inadequate

- Weaknesses in teaching over time have led to pupils underachieving.
- Frequently teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils, especially the more able, can achieve. Too often teachers fail to take account of what the pupils already know and can do which results in activities that do not meet fully the needs of all abilities. Often the work is too easy for more-able pupils or too hard for others and so the learning is held back.
- Teachers do not always make it clear to pupils what they are going to learn in lessons and how their success and the quality of their work will be measured. Frequently, their plans emphasise the activities to be completed rather than the knowledge, skills and understanding to be developed. Too often teachers talk to the whole class for too long which limits the amount of time that pupils are actively and independently learning, resulting in slower progress. Frequently, teachers fail to capitalise on pupils' positive attitudes in lessons and do not give them the chance

to learn and take responsibility for finding things out for themselves.

- Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and are accurate in their judgements. However, they do not focus closely enough on the progress pupils are making to enable them to adjust their teaching to meet pupils' needs. Teachers' marking is thorough with helpful comments but not enough time is given to allow pupils to respond and make the necessary improvements to their work.
- The pupil premium funding is being used to provide small-group work and one-to-one support for eligible pupils. Gaps in attainment and progress rates have been closed due to effective support.
- Teaching assistants are not always used to best effect in lessons. Sometimes their role is not clearly defined so that they make insufficient impact on the learning, especially for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. However they support pupils' personal and emotional development well.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is good. Typically, pupils are friendly and courteous. Pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently positive. Even when faced with teaching that does not fully meet their needs, they try hard and do their best in their lessons. Pupils concentrate well and persevere with their tasks including when the pace of learning is slow and the opportunities for them to find things out for themselves are limited. Low-level disruption in lessons is uncommon.
- Pupils, their parents and carers and the staff judge behaviour to be good. Incidents of poor behaviour are few. Bullying seldom occurs but pupils have confidence in the adults to sort out any problems that may arise. However, behaviour is not yet outstanding as the school's leaders do not involve pupils in resolving the minor incidents that sometimes occur.
- Pupils have a good awareness of the different forms that bullying can take, such as racist name-calling and cyber bullying and they know how to keep themselves safe, for example on the internet.
- Teachers manage behaviour well with a consistent system that is clearly understood by all. House points help to motivate pupils and they take great pride in being prefects or the head boy or head girl.
- There are marked improvements over time for pupils with behavioural needs and exclusions are rare. The pastoral team has provided very effective support for these pupils and their families so that they are being successful in school and are included fully in all aspects of school life.
- Attendance is much improved this year and currently is above the national average. This is due to the effective strategies that the school has put in place to reduce absence by forging stronger relationships with parents and carers. Pupils are punctual to school.

### **The leadership and management are inadequate**

- Leadership and management are inadequate because the school's leaders have not been successful in addressing the areas identified for improvement at that inspection. As a result, the quality of education provided by the school has declined.
- Leaders' checks on how well the school is doing are not sufficiently robust and give an unrealistic view of its performance. Leaders do not analyse the impact of their work on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.
- Targets in improvement plans do not focus precisely on rates of pupils' progress. The plans have not been implemented systematically and then checked to see what is working well. This means that new initiatives, such as those to improve achievement in writing, have had limited effect.
- Checks on the quality of teaching are not sufficiently analytical to identify why teaching is not having a better impact on learning. Leaders do not have a coherent view of teaching quality

across the school. Consequently, training for teachers is not targeted carefully enough to raise the quality of their work.

- Performance management is not being used effectively to drive up the quality of teaching as professional advice to teachers is too vague and not followed up rigorously. As a consequence, pupils' experiences vary too much between classes, making the pace of learning uneven across the school.
- School leaders are not tracking the attainment and progress of pupils robustly and so they do not have a clear overview of how well the school is doing. This means they are unable to respond swiftly to reverse any drop in achievement.
- In a very short space of time the new headteacher has won the confidence of the staff, the governors and the parents and carers. She has an accurate view of the school's performance and has created a more focused plan for improvement. However, it is too early for the actions contained in this plan to have had a significant effect on pupils' achievement.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. An array of community events has been effective in developing pupils' understanding of life in multicultural Britain.
- Relationships with parents and carers are positive due the effective work by leaders to involve them fully in the life of the school. This was observed during the inspection when a large number of parents and carers attended the sports event.
- The local authority has taken a light-touch approach to this school and its work has not been successful in improving achievement. Senior leaders have undertaken training provided by the local authority in preparation for inspection and also on how to improve the teaching of writing which is beginning to prove beneficial.
- The school tackles discrimination actively but its commitment to equality does not always translate into practice. Not enough is being done to ensure that gaps in rates of progress between different groups of pupils, such as disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and their classmates are narrowing.
- All statutory requirements for safeguarding are met. The school has robust policies for keeping children safe and these are implemented thoroughly.
- Newly qualified teachers should not be appointed.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Despite its best efforts, the work of the governing body has not been as effective as it should have been. Governors have asked searching questions of the school's leaders but until recently were not given accurate information about the school's performance or of the quality of teaching. This lack of clear information has hampered their ability to challenge leaders about why pupils' progress is not better. However, they are now more involved in checking the work of the school for themselves and they have gained a realistic overview of the school's work based on comparisons of its data with all schools nationally. They have undertaken training in preparation for inspection and are keen to develop their skills in understanding performance data. Governors are aware of how the performance of staff is being managed and the links to pay progression. Financial management is secure. The governing body has made sure that the pupil premium funding has been used effectively to narrow the gaps between the attainment of those pupils for whom it is intended and others in the school. However, it has not ensured that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable and attain the standards that they should.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	115606
<b>Local authority</b>	Gloucester
<b>Inspection number</b>	412190

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	176
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pat Gifford
<b>Headteacher</b>	Caroline Holcombe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18–19 November 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01452 520714
<b>Fax number</b>	01452 303384
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@st-james-jun.gloucs.sch.uk">admin@st-james-jun.gloucs.sch.uk</a>

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