

Holy Trinity Church of England VC Primary School and Nursery Unit

Cross Road, Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 9QX

Inspection dates 6–7 November 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:

- Although improving, pupils' progress is not yet good because the rate across year groups is inconsistent. Attainment is not above average due to some weaker aspects in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
- In the past, strategies to support some pupils at risk of underachieving were not effective enough to help these pupils close the gap on their peers.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils develop good independent learning skills and achieve well.
- The lengthy absence of some senior and middle leaders impeded improvement priorities because too few other leaders had the capacity to cover these roles well.
- Until recently the governing body was not holding staff to account well enough for the quality of education they provided.
- Although leadership in English and mathematics has improved, other middle leaders are still developing the skills needed to help drive forward improvement.

The school has the following strengths:

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They get on well together and behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.
- The most-able pupils achieve well and consistently attain standards above or well above those expected.
- Year leaders demonstrate strengths in teaching which help support less effective colleagues well.
- Good systems for checking the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement help ensure improvement planning is well targeted at weaker areas.
- The strengthened senior leadership team and governing body have begun to tackle the remaining areas for improvement well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 30 lessons or parts of lessons of which seven were joint observations with senior leaders. They also made a number of short visits to group or individual activities to support pupils who might be at risk or underachieving and extra-curricular activities for physical education and sport.
- They heard a sample of pupils read and scrutinised a sample of pupils' written work.
- Inspectors observed other aspects of the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents including the school's records on current pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. Documents relating to planning and monitoring and safeguarding were also looked at.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, staff, including senior and middle managers, and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 94 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and a small number of parents and carers bringing their children to school were also spoken with.
- Responses from the 50 staff questionnaires were analysed.

Inspection team

Diane Wilkinson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Martin Greenwood

Additional Inspector

Kevin Lynch

Additional Inspector

Ann Sydney

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Holy Trinity is a much larger than average size primary school with three classes in each year group. There is also a Nursery class which provides funded nursery education for children aged three and four years. Nursery children attend part time.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is in line with the national average. The proportion supported by school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic families, including those who speak English as an additional language, is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides funding for children in local authority care, children from service families and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- There have been a number of staff changes since the school's previous inspection. There have also been long-term absences among senior and middle leaders over the past year.
- The school meets government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for progress and attainment in English and mathematics.
- The governing body provides a breakfast club for pupils which was also inspected.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by the end of this academic year by:
 - ensuring that activities help all pupils, whatever their needs, talents or styles of learning, to make at least good progress throughout lessons
 - making effective use of teaching assistants to help check on what pupils are doing and encouraging greater progress
 - helping pupils to develop a good understanding of their learning, and the capacity to work independently.
- Raise pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics through:
 - improving the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make in words) and providing reading resources that promote the acquisition of phonics skills well, especially to increase the number of lower-attaining pupils who reach the reading levels expected for their age
 - consistently expecting pupils to present their work well and improve the quality of their handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar
 - placing a greater emphasis on pupils using their mathematical skills in solving problems with only a little help from the teacher.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - building on the skills of senior leaders and governors in monitoring improvement work, especially to ensure effective outcomes in improving achievement and teaching quality

- ensuring that all middle managers and subject leaders acquire the skills needed to check and develop the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in their area of responsibility, and extending leadership training to other staff so they are sufficiently skilled to take over and cover longer absences.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- On entry to the Nursery, children's skills are mainly at the levels expected for this age. They are lower however, in communication and language, and in literacy skills.
- Good progress made in the Nursery and Reception ensures attainment is above average by the time children move into Year 1 although it was lower than this for the majority of other pupils in the school. This good start is not built on well enough in other year groups where progress is mainly satisfactory and pupils do not achieve well over time. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly average by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- After the previous inspection attainment began to rise, but long-term absence of some key leaders slowed the effectiveness of improvement strategies last year. Consequently a minority of pupils, mainly Year 6 lower attainers, did not make sufficient progress. As a result pupils did not make expected progress and attainment declined. Inspection evidence indicates other year groups were much less affected. For example, current Year 6 pupils are consistently making good progress and attainment is well placed to rise in all subjects.
- The most-able pupils achieve well. They consistently attain the higher Level 5 in the Year 6 national assessments with improved provision increasing the proportion attaining Level 6.
- In the past the school's approach to the teaching of phonics has left some pupils less confident in tackling new words although their other reading skills were well developed. In particular, the lack of secure phonics knowledge limited the achievement of lower-attaining pupils and results in the Year 1 phonics screening test were below average. However, the complete reorganisation of the programme for learning phonics is helping to bring about swift improvement this year.
- By Year 2, pupils write effective stories or descriptions, enlivening their work by interesting vocabulary or use of connectives. By Year 6, pupils write well for a range of purposes. Their 'newspaper reports' either in broadsheet or tabloid style on the entry to London of Ann Boleyn, as part of their Tudor history topic, were very effective. However, too often pupils' work is spoilt by their poor presentation and careless spelling, grammar or punctuation and this limits their overall attainment in writing to average.
- Year 2 pupils' understanding of place value and calculation skills is very secure. This is built on well in older year groups so, by Year 6, pupils work confidently with fractions and in a range of standard measures. However, in all year groups, pupils' capacity to solve mathematical problems, especially when working unaided, is less secure.
- The school's commitment to equality of opportunity is evident in the rapid action being taken to improve the support for pupils with different needs and starting points. This has ensured that pupils with significant needs now make the progress they are capable of and achieve as well as their classmates.
 - The strong promotion of boys' achievement has seen them beginning to close the attainment gap on girls although there is still some way to go.
 - The progress of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and lower-attaining pupils is accelerating due to the better focused group work.
 - More effective use of pupil premium funding ensures that these pupils are closing the gap on their peers much quicker than previously. However, partly because a significant minority also have special educational needs, they are still about a year behind their peers in English and mathematics.
 - Pupils from different ethnic groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, make the same progress as their classmates.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching, although improving, and good for children in the Nursery and Reception, is not yet consistently good enough to ensure that pupils in other year groups achieve well and therefore it requires improvement.
- Most teachers plan a secure range of activities to help pupils with different needs or abilities improve their skills and knowledge, but only a minority check how well all pupils are progressing during individual learning activities which limits their achievement. Occasionally lessons merely reinforce what has been learnt and no new learning takes place.
- When teaching assistants are deployed effectively they support learning well. However, on a minority of occasions insufficient use is made of them to monitor activities, deal with misconceptions or move pupils on to new learning when they are ready.
- Only the best teachers have the confidence to fully involve pupils in their own learning, letting pupils plan their own tasks or take the lead in discussions. There is overuse of worksheets in too many lessons. These weaknesses limit pupils' independent learning skills.
- Until recently phonics was not taught well enough and left some pupils, especially the lower attainers, having difficulty in reading new words. The reading resources for younger pupils do not support the acquisition of phonics skills well enough. Other reading skills are effectively taught through good guided reading sessions, and the teaching of phonics is rapidly improving, with some outstanding phonics activities being observed during the inspection.
- Adults are skilled at questioning pupils to help their understanding, rarely giving an answer, but drawing out explanations from the pupils themselves.
- Marking and the use of targets for English and mathematics are a significant strength. Pupils find this very helpful, but marking in other subjects is much less good.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' especially good attitudes to school and commitment to learning mean they nearly always work hard, even when teaching is less inspiring or the pace of learning slow.
- Pupils are friendly, polite and helpful and take good consideration of others' safety at playtimes or when moving around school. Their safety awareness is good including the understanding of how to avoid hazards when using the internet.
- When asked to do so pupils work well independently. For example, during the inspection two of the most able Year 2 pupils very excitedly researched the names and properties of some two-dimensional shapes, usually taught to much older pupils. Recognising the need to strengthen pupils' independent learning skills further, the school is addressing this as a key priority.
- The strong commitment of staff to prevent discrimination and foster good relationships is evident in the rare incidences of bullying or racial incidents which pupils say are always dealt with swiftly and successfully. Pupils who find good behaviour difficult are effectively supported and their behaviour improves well over time.
- Pupils are well aware that poor behaviour is not tolerated and respond effectively to the strategies in place to help support this. However, both they and some support staff who responded to the staff questionnaire report that the lack of a consistent approach to rewards and sanctions makes it difficult to recognise what is required on some occasions.
- Most pupils enjoy school very much and attend regularly. Good strategies to discourage poor attendance and the school's strong discouragement of term-time holidays are helping attendance levels to rise and it is now close to the national average.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because too few leaders and governors had the skills to help move the school forward during the absence of key staff. Consequently the

school did not respond quickly enough to emerging weaknesses, and improvements in the quality of teaching were not built on well enough last year.

- Middle managers such as subject leaders did not have sufficient skills or opportunity to monitor and evaluate their area of responsibility. In particular they were not using information from the school's recently introduced comprehensive, rigorous and regular systems for monitoring pupils' progress well enough.
- Previous monitoring and support of teaching quality paid too little regard to the impact this was having on pupils' achievement. The setting of targets for teachers was not focused sufficiently on how well staff were improving pupils' progress. Until recently the governing body did not have sufficient information to only award salary increases for good performance.
- These weaknesses are now being addressed. Senior leaders and governors use a range of monitoring information well to keep a careful check on the school's work and its effect on pupils' progress.
- English and mathematics coordinators now carry out their roles well. Good professional development opportunities are increasing leadership skills of other staff so that areas can be covered during times of absence, although this continues to be an area for development.
- Improvement planning is now well targeted at remaining weaknesses, with inspection evidence indicating improvement in all areas. The full impact on pupils' achievement is not yet evident, but this gives confidence that the school is securely placed to improve further.
- The curriculum is well designed to capture pupils' interest. Activities to support learning for children in the Nursery and Reception support their learning well. Programmes to improve weaker aspects of pupils' learning and enhance the achievement of pupils at risk of underachieving are bringing about improved progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is promoted well, the effect being evident in their good behaviour and relationships. Pupils' knowledge of a range of different cultures is limited.
- Parents and carers support pupils' learning especially well, particularly during the 'Show and Tell' phonics sessions. Most parents and carers have positive views, with those who spoke to inspectors being full of praise for the school's work.
- Safeguarding arrangements fully meet requirements including for pupils who attend the exceptionally well run breakfast club. The vetting of staff and child protection procedures are followed rigorously.
- The local authority has supported the school appropriately since its previous inspection, raising the level of support, especially in developing middle leaders' skills, since the decline in attainment last year.
- The recently received funding to support pupils' well-being through physical education and sports activities has been effectively allocated to enhance this aspect of the school's work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Previous weaknesses in governance have been fully addressed. Governors are effectively organised and well informed through improved systems for checking and reporting the school's work and their good training in understanding data. Currently governors hold staff to account well, although the full impact of this on the school's work is not yet evident.
 - Governors ensure that they carry out their statutory duties conscientiously including in important areas such as safeguarding.
 - Pupil premium funding is effectively allocated to meet the specific needs of those pupils who receive it through funding extra support staff and special literacy and numeracy programmes. The rigorous monitoring of this already shows an increase in pupils' progress.
 - Governors' monitoring of teaching quality has been considerably strengthened and this, together with good reorganisation of performance management, ensures that they have all the information required to award salary increases only for good performance.

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	126911
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	429967

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	697
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Keedy
Headteacher	Kay Rawling
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 November 2008
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