

Creech St Michael Church of England Primary School

Hyde Lane, Taunton, TA3 5QQ

Inspection dates

3–4 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- There has been underachievement in Key Stage 1 for the last three years particularly in mathematics. Boys underachieve in writing in most classes across the school.
- Teaching has not yet had enough impact for pupils to make sufficient progress in Key Stage 1 or in Years 3 and 4 in writing and mathematics.
- There have been low expectations of the progress pupils can make as they move through the school.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, did not act quickly enough to arrest the declining achievement at Key Stage 1.
- More-able pupils have not been challenged sufficiently and are underachieving particularly at Key Stage 1.
- Leaders did not analyse the progress of groups of pupils accurately and often enough to make sure that teaching was modified quickly.
- Governors depend on reports from the headteacher to check the quality of teaching and do not have a regular way of checking this for themselves.

The school has the following strengths

- It is a harmonious community where there are high-quality relationships at all levels, mutual respect and strong teamwork. It is a school where each individual is valued, and there is equality and no discrimination.
- There are strong links with the churches in the local community which helps to ensure that pupils' spiritual development is good.
- The pupils grow into mature young people who take responsibilities for the many activities within the school and enjoy many different sporting and cultural opportunities that the school provides.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they are keen to learn.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 14 lessons taught by nine teachers and a sports coach. Five were jointly observed with the headteacher. In addition, short visits were made to other lessons and inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors, and two groups of pupils. There was a telephone call to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 36 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View and also of a recent parent questionnaire conducted by the school. The responses to 38 staff questionnaires were analysed.
- The inspection team looked at school documents, including school data relating to assessments and pupils' progress, planning for school improvement, the monitoring of teaching and learning, records relating to behaviour and attendance, the governing body minutes and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Janet Dinsmore, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Martin Greenwood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium (additional government funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after) is below average.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There has been a change of headteacher since the previous inspection.
- The school is part of the Taunton Learning Partnership.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that a greater proportion is good and outstanding by making sure that:
 - there are high expectations and motivating opportunities so that all pupils, particularly boys, can achieve well in writing in all classes
 - learning activities in mathematics throughout the school are securely based on assessment of what pupils can already do, and speed up progress further, particularly for more-able pupils.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that:
 - prompt, succinct analysis of the progress of groups of pupils leads to rapid improvement consistently well throughout the school
 - the checking of teachers' performance, coaching and feedback to them results in improvements in the identified areas
 - these actions and the resulting impact are clearly communicated to governors.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children start in the Reception class with a range of skills, some of which are below those expected for their age, particularly in social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, in addition to self-care. They make good progress with social and emotional development as the school makes this a clear focus. More-able children do not always make the progress of which they are capable in writing because planned activities sometimes restrict what they could achieve.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 do not yet make good progress from their starting points. Some more-able pupils are just beginning to achieve at higher levels in reading and mathematics, but this has not yet been sustained for long enough.
- Pupils learn about letters and the sounds they make, but the teaching of this, although improving their progress in reading, has not helped their progress in writing because there is not a clear and motivating reason for writing.
- In previous years, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have not made the progress of which they are capable in writing and mathematics. This is beginning to be addressed, but in some mathematics lessons, they are required to record steps in calculation that are unnecessary when they already understand.
- More-able pupils have been underachieving in Key Stage 1 and there have been low expectations of the progress of which they are capable in Key Stage 1 and Years 3 and 4. This is now being addressed and they are beginning to make better progress.
- Pupils in Year 6 make good progress because of well-targeted teaching, especially in mathematics. This accelerates pupils' progress quickly but does not yet fully compensate for underachievement in other classes in the school. The large majority of the current cohort have made good progress from Key Stage 1, a third are achieving at the higher Level 5 in writing, and half in mathematics and reading. There are, however, a few boys that are underachieving in writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in reading at Key Stage 2. The school provides additional support for this which is clearly directed to those pupils who need it. In other subjects, they are making similar progress to their classmates.
- The small numbers of pupils eligible for additional funding receive the support that they need, especially in reading. There is no gap in their achievement, in all subjects, with their classmates at this school.
- Pupils enjoy reading and there is improving achievement in reading across the school. They use their knowledge of letters and sounds to read in Key Stage 1 and there has been significant improvement in the results of the Year 1 check. More-able pupils can understand and read books well. Lower-ability pupils in year 2, for example, used their reading skills well to find information in a webpage. Pupils in Year 6 read a good range of books and can talk about them knowledgeably.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has not enabled the more-able pupils to make the progress of which they are capable. There have been low expectations of what pupils can achieve at Key Stage 1, especially in mathematics.
- Teaching has been inconsistent across the school because pupils in Key Stage 1 and Years 3 and 4 have not had the opportunities to learn rapidly and effectively in mathematics and writing until very recently. In some classes, the pace of learning is not fast enough and pupils repeat work they can already do.
- Since September 2013, the school has reorganised the routines in Key Stage 1 to create sustained and stimulating opportunities for pupils to learn in writing and mathematics lessons

during the morning. This is beginning to speed up pupils' progress.

- Teaching of mathematics has recently been reorganised in Years 1–5 so that pupils are given instruction and activities that enable all groups of pupils to learn well. This is beginning to speed up progress in most classes and teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Teachers' marking and feedback to pupils was identified as an area to improve in the previous inspection. This has only recently been addressed for writing and, as result, pupils are now making more rapid gains. Pupils know how to improve their work.
- Teaching assistants are trained well. They are used effectively to work with pupils with specific identified special educational needs or those whose progress in reading is slowing. They contribute well to learning in most lessons by careful questioning to check pupils' understanding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They have good attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons, even when they are not learning at the pace of which they are capable.
- They behave well in the playground and around the school. Year 6 pupils have responsibilities, for example, administering the 'walk to school' programme independently, organising fundraising and assemblies, and taking leadership roles in physical education.
- Pupils understand how to assess risk for themselves. They use playground equipment safely and responsibly, and know exactly how to stay safe when using the internet.
- Pupils say that bullying is infrequent and dealt with well by staff. Any name-calling or minor physical misbehaviour is acted upon quickly, and pupils and staff know exactly how the rewards and sanctions procedures work, and these are carefully recorded and followed up with parents and carers by the headteacher when necessary.
- Attendance is above average and the school has clear procedures for dealing with any lateness.
- The school has good arrangements for supporting pupils and their families whose circumstances make them more at risk of not doing well. This enables pupils who have difficulties in moderating their behaviour to make good progress with this, to be settled in school and make progress with their learning.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. They assess potential risk for trips well. Pupils know they are safe and are confident that there is always an adult they can talk to if they have worries.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leaders and managers did not take action quickly enough to check that the system they were using to track pupils' progress was giving them accurate information about its quality. As a result, they were slow to check this and had not set sufficiently challenging targets for pupils and teachers.
- Checks on pupils' progress are now accurate, but challenging targets have not been in place long enough to show improvements in achievement, particularly in writing in Years 3 and 4 and in all subjects at Key Stage 1.
- The headteacher has an accurate understanding of individual teachers' skills and how they can be improved, but does not yet check this frequently enough so that improvements are more rapid. Performance of teachers is managed effectively according to the Teachers' Standards, and there is no underperformance. Teachers pay relates to their performance in the classroom.
- Statutory requirements for safeguarding are met.
- Leaders, including middle leaders, have taken the appropriate actions from their self-evaluation to improve the teaching of reading since April 2012, mathematics since September 2013 and writing since January 2014. Training has been provided for all staff to improve the teaching of writing and mathematics, and pupils' progress is beginning to improve. There is strong teamwork and ambition to continue to make improvements.

- The organisation of the teaching of subjects has been improved, and is now providing good learning experiences and more stimulating opportunities to write. This has not yet been in place for long enough to show sustained improvement in achievement in Key Stage 1, and for writing and mathematics across the school. Music and forest school activities contribute well to pupils' social and cultural development.
- Parents and carers are pleased with the work of the school. They appreciate the quality of relationships and dedication of the staff. A few would like more information about the progress their children make at school.
- The local authority recognises the experience of the headteacher and the strong partnership with other schools to bring about improvements. It has not provided support for this school, although it had some concerns about declining standards at Key Stage 1. It considers, and inspection evidence shows, that there is capacity to improve.
- Sports funding has been spent effectively to improve the quality of physical education at the school, increase the range of sports in which pupils can participate, and give them access to good-quality facilities. School sports teams in rugby, for example, do well in national competitions.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have made sure that there is a good range of skills from business, public services and education so that they can begin to hold the school to account. They are aware that achievement at Key Stage 1 has been declining and what the school has begun to do to improve the quality of teaching in writing and mathematics. The governing body does not, however, have accurate records of any challenge that it provides for the school. It has not made sure that it has consistent professional advice to assist it in managing the performance of the headteacher. Governors know that the headteacher manages the performance of teachers effectively. There are not enough regular and planned procedures for checking the performance of the school for themselves. Governors support the school well, and understand and promote its role as part of the wider community. They know that additional funding has been spent effectively to ensure that these pupils receive the help they need to make more rapid gains in reading and mathematics.

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	123793
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	439906

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	258
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ruth Farrow
Headteacher	Jan McCarthy
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 June 2009
Telephone number	01823 442898
Fax number	01823 444002
Email address	office@creech-st-michael.somerset.sch.uk

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