

St Mary's Church of England VA Primary School

Wintringham Road, St Neot's, PE19 1NX

Inspection dates

3–4 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- School leaders have not taken effective action to secure improvements in teaching and learning. They are over dependent on external support to make the necessary improvements.
- Teaching is inadequate because some teachers do not challenge pupils enough and expectations are too low. Marking is inconsistent in quality and pupils' mistakes are not corrected or followed up.
- Pupils of different abilities and circumstances do not make enough progress in English and mathematics. The most-able pupils often find work too easy due to insufficient levels of challenge in lessons.
- Pupils' writing is frequently inaccurate, poorly presented and handwriting lacks care.
- Low-level disruption holds up learning in the weaker lessons. Some pupils have said that they feel unsafe because of bullying in the school.
- Attendance remains below average because too many pupils are persistently absent.
- Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement because leaders do not use assessment information well enough to help all groups of children to make rapid progress over time.
- The partnership with parents requires improvement. Several express disappointment that their concerns are not listened to by school leaders. These concerns sometimes remain unresolved.
- School governance requires improvement. Recent improvements are yet to be reflected in better school performance. Some statutory information is missing from the school website.

The school has the following strengths

- Children enjoy school in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are keen to learn because teaching, while not yet good over time, is improving.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters represent) is good and standards in reading show improvement.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because of the good support they receive.
- Positive relationships exist between teachers, support staff and pupils. Vulnerable pupils are nurtured and well cared for.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in parts of nine lessons and an assembly. The inspectors completed a further review of teaching and learning across the school and undertook a scrutiny of pupils' books with the headteacher. Eight members of staff were seen teaching.
- The inspectors looked at samples of work from all the classes, reviewed the displays of pupils' work in the classrooms and corridors, spoke to pupils about their work during lessons and listened to them read.
- The inspection team took into consideration comments from parents and the 18 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also spoke to a number of parents during the inspection.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, looked at attendance and progress information, improvement plans, documents related to safeguarding, evidence of the monitoring of teaching and reports from the local authority.
- Meetings were held with older pupils, school leaders and staff at the school. Meetings were held with six members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority and the Diocese of Ely.

Inspection team

Philip Mann, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Dellis Smith

Seconded 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

- The school is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average.
- The pupil premium funding, extra government funding for disadvantaged pupils, is used to support just over a third of the pupils. This is above the national average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Children start part-time in the Nursery and transfer into the Reception class at the beginning of the school year that they are five.
- There is a before and after school club on the school site managed by the governing body, and included as part of this inspection.
- There have been a number of staff changes since the previous inspection.
- The school is planning to become an academy within the academy trust sponsored by the Diocese of Ely.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what all pupils can do and how they behave in lessons
 - ensuring that the most-able pupils are always challenged enough in lessons
 - ensuring that assessment is accurate, thorough and regular
 - improving the quality of marking and feedback so that pupils understand fully what it is they need to do next to improve.
- Raise pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in writing, by:
 - setting challenging targets and monitoring closely pupils' progress towards achieving them
 - ensuring that writing is accurate and well presented
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to write at length and with fluency.
- Eliminate any poor behaviour by:
 - reviewing the schools anti-bullying and behaviour policies to make sure they are effective and consistently implemented
 - analysing data related to behaviour incidents to identify reasons for poor behaviour and act swiftly to address these causes
 - providing training for staff in the management of pupil behaviour
 - ensure that the concerns of parents are fully resolved.
- Raise rates of pupil attendance to average levels by:
 - working with other professionals and families more closely to reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent.

- Improve the effectiveness of leaders, managers and governors by:
 - ensuring they rigorously monitor the quality of teaching and learning and its impact on raising achievement
 - rigorously interrogating school data to raise standards and support school improvement
 - increase the involvement of middle leaders in school improvement
 - ensure statutory requirements related to the effective use of the pupil premium are included on the school's website.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- School leaders have not successfully tackled the issues from the previous inspection with the result that pupil achievement remains inconsistent across the school and inadequate overall. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Consequently, standards are very low by the time pupils leave school at the end of Key Stage 2.
- School leaders have failed to tackle the weaknesses in teaching and learning identified at the previous inspection. Consequently, they demonstrate insufficient capacity within the school to rapidly improve pupil standards in English and mathematics.
- Middle leaders have little impact on school improvement. Past monitoring has been insufficiently robust and consequently standards have fallen. They are too reliant on external support from local authority advisers and are yet to play a significant role in school improvement.
- The partnership with parents requires improvement. On the whole, parents are happy with the care and support provided for their children. However, inspection evidence and discussions with parents confirms that a number of them are concerned about pupil behaviour and bullying within the school. Several express disappointment that their concerns are not listened to by school leaders and remain unresolved.
- The headteacher and members of the senior leadership team monitor teaching performance more frequently. Observations are recorded and areas of development for individual teachers identified for them to work at. This monitoring of teacher performance is yet to have a significant impact on the overall quality of teaching across the school and the necessary improvements in pupil achievement.
- The promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development requires improvement. A well organised programme of assemblies effectively promotes a sense of spirituality. Links with the local church are strong and pupils benefit from this. However, even though the school promotes the core British values of tolerance and respect for each other, these are not reflected in the way some pupils behave with other pupils either in class or in the play areas. The school celebrates a range of cultures well. In the nursery and reception classes, for example, children were actively involved in learning about the Chinese New Year. They took pride in showing their writing in Chinese of the word 'goat'. Displays about where pupils come from in Europe, broadens all pupils' awareness of the wider world around them.
- The curriculum requires improvement. There is sufficient balance to meet current requirements but it is yet to be fully modified to meet the demands of the new National Curriculum. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have the opportunity to learn French in the classes where teachers feel confident to teach it. The sports funding is used appropriately to support specialist teaching and provide pupils with a range of sport related after school clubs.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity and elimination of any discrimination requires improvement. It is a key aim of the school and reflected in the good levels of support provided for those pupils in particular need and for those who are most vulnerable. Specific support is provided for those pupils who are disabled or have special education needs. However, weaknesses in teaching over time puts other pupils at a disadvantage because they are not able to achieve their full potential in readiness for the next stage of their education. This is especially so for more able pupils.
- School leaders do not make good enough use of pupil premium funding. It is used to support disadvantaged pupils through a wide range of activities. These include small group tuition by teaching assistants; either in lessons or individual one to one tuition out of the classrooms. The impact of this support is variable. Analysis of progress data indicates that some of these pupils make good progress and gaps in achievement are reducing. However, inspection evidence confirms much variation in the achievement of these pupils across the school.

- The local authority has not been successful enough in supporting or challenging the school. The local authority provides significant levels of support for the school through regular school monitoring and improvement reviews, but school leaders have not risen to the challenge and improvements are too slow. Several advisers provide much needed guidance and support to those middle leaders with a subject responsibility, but this has not been effective in making improvements fast enough.
- The arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils related to the recruitment of staff meet statutory requirements.
- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance requires improvement. The governing body has not been fully effective in holding school leaders to account regarding their performance. However, governors have responded rapidly to the local authority's review of school governance. They have been quick to make the recommended changes to the governing body's committee structures and organisation of meetings.
 - Furthermore, individual governors undertake specific monitoring activity linked closely to the school's improvement plan. As a result, the governing body is now more aware of the current strengths and weaknesses of existing teaching and pupil achievement. They make appropriate use of this information to ensure teachers' pay is linked to the progress that pupils make. However, the impact of this focussed monitoring is yet to be reflected in better school performance.
 - The school website contains most of the necessary statutory information required for parents. There is a full summary about how the pupil premium funding is used to support disadvantaged pupils. However, there is no analysis of the impact of these initiatives on reducing gaps in achievement of these pupils for parents to review on the website.
 - The governing body maintains appropriate oversight of the before and after school club. The club provides good levels of childcare for more vulnerable pupils outside of school hours within a caring and nurturing environment.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. The number of recorded incidents over the school year of poor behaviour, some of it aggressive, is significant. Staff spend considerable amounts of time trying to resolve these incidents and improve pupil behaviour throughout the school. The school's behaviour incident log shows that the same pupils are responsible for several of the incidents, demonstrating that their behaviour is not improving.
- Pupils have an awareness of the different types of bullying. However, discussions with pupils confirm that a minority do not feel safe. They say that issues of bullying are not always resolved quickly by the school.
- A small number of parents are unhappy with the way bullying is dealt with by the leaders of the school. They do not have confidence in the ability of school leaders to resolve their concerns successfully.
- School leaders are yet to use the detailed information gathered about pupil behaviour to take effective action to secure the necessary improvements. As a result, the behaviour of many pupils, especially those who exhibit more challenging behaviour, is not improving quickly enough.
- In lessons where teaching is weak and the pace is slow, pupils do not concentrate. In lessons that are well planned and engaging, pupils display positive attitudes towards their work. They respond well to instructions and are ready and eager to learn.
- There have been no exclusions this year and attendance is improving. However, it is below the national average because there are still too many pupils who are persistently absent.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is inadequate. Some pupils express a concern about the level of poor behaviour and being bullied in school. Inspection evidence confirms this to be the case and a number of parents feel the same. This bullying is yet to be fully recognised, identified and eliminated by school leaders and governors. Consequently, pupils are not fully safe while at school.
- Pupils know about the different forms of bullying and who to go to if they have a concern. Pupils are aware about how to stay safe when using the internet. Guidance is given through assemblies, lessons and through discussions. All pupils have individual passwords when using computers at school or when completing homework tasks using the school's virtual learning software. Systems are in place for pupils to quickly inform senior school leaders if they are being bullied when using the computer. These issues are quickly followed up; for instance by the removal of password access from any pupil found using the internet inappropriately to bully others.
- All safeguarding procedures and those for checking the qualifications and suitability of adults working with pupils, including those working in the out of school club, are applied well. The school is quick to respond to any concerns related to the protection of vulnerable pupils outside of school. Links with social services are good and used well to ensure that the welfare of these pupils is the concern of all staff.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate. Improvements to teaching since the previous inspection have not taken place quickly enough. A high turnover of staff has led to further inconsistencies in teaching and a fall in standards.
- The quality of lesson planning varies from class to class. There is often insufficient challenge planned for the most able pupils. Little attention is given to pupils in Key Stage 2 to the effective teaching of spelling, grammar and handwriting. Expectations are too low and this is often reflected in poor presentation and untidy work in the pupils' books.
- The need to improve marking highlighted at the previous inspection has received insufficient attention. It still remains inconsistent in quality and is yet to have a significant impact on pupil progress.
- Some teachers find it difficult to manage the challenging behaviour of the pupils in their class. There is an over reliance of pupils being withdrawn from classrooms to calm down or receive extra support. This often happens at key points in the lesson when important teaching takes place. Consequently, these pupils miss out on key learning opportunities which limits their progress further.
- Relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils overall are positive. Pupils respond well to individual care and support in guided work such as that seen in a Year 6 mathematics lesson. Furthermore, they respond very well to opportunities to work with other pupils to complete practical tasks; as seen in a Year 4 art lesson when these pupils worked in small groups to identify the characteristics of pictures by a famous Japanese artist. The behaviour of these pupils was good. However, in other lessons, the pace of learning is often too slow and consequently pupils become distracted and drift off task.
- Phonics is taught well. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 use their knowledge of phonics to sound out and successfully identify new words. The less able pupils in Years 1 and 2 read mostly with confidence and expression using their knowledge of phonics to sound out difficult and unfamiliar words.
- Teaching and support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is inadequate because progress for these pupils is too variable. However, school leaders are implementing improvements to accelerate the progress these pupils make to eliminate inconsistencies in achievement. For example, the school records show that the early identification and intervention of pupils in danger of falling behind is beginning to have an impact. Support assistants provide caring support to these pupils through small group work and individual work in reading and mathematical development.
- Support for pupils who speak English as an additional language is good. Pupils are carefully inducted into

school and given specific help in learning English by a trained adult both in and out of lessons. Class teachers provide extra support in the classrooms by displaying key words and extra information in the pupil's first language, such as Polish. Support assistants or specialist peripatetic teachers provide pupils from the traveller community with equally effective help in the classrooms.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate because standards in reading, writing and mathematics are too low. After some initial improvement following the previous inspection, they have fallen to levels significantly below the national average in 2014 at the end of Key Stage 2. The progress, over time, of different groups of pupils varies considerably, as does their achievement.
- These low standards are particularly evident in pupils' writing books. Pupils make too many spelling and punctuation errors in their written work. There is no consistent handwriting style throughout the school and consequently many pupils are not able to form their letters correctly. This prevents them from writing neatly and with fluency. Many books contain unnecessary mistakes and presentation is poor.
- Despite the very low standards in mathematics seen in 2014, signs of improvement are beginning to emerge at the end of Key Stage 2. These older pupils are working at nationally expected levels for this age group. Their work is set out neatly and calculations are accurate. For instance, pupils in Year 6 are able to use co-ordinates to confidently and competently draw and transfer two-dimensional shapes onto a complex graph.
- The achievement of the most able pupils is inadequate. Too often tasks and activities provide insufficient challenge for them. The proportion of these pupils who attained higher than the expected levels at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 in 2014 was well below the national average.
- Due to the small numbers of pupils in Year 6 eligible for extra funding through the pupil premium, it is not possible to comment on their relative attainment against national data for 2014, without the risk of identifying individuals. However, the school's information confirms that pupils eligible for extra funding through the pupil premium make inconsistent progress throughout the school. Consequently, achievement gaps are yet to be reduced significantly.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs do not make the expected progress by the time they leave school. They are not well prepared for the next stage in their education. Their achievement is well below that of similar pupils nationally. However leaders are currently taking measures to address this.
- The achievement of pupils who speak English as an additional language is good. Analysis of school information and talking to these pupils about their work confirms that these pupils make rapid progress in their English and mathematics and quickly make up any gaps in attainment with other pupils.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Leadership and management requires improvement because the information gathered from assessment is not used rigorously enough to plan what children, especially the most able, need to learn next.
- Teaching over time requires improvement. Teachers and additional adults do not always record what children are able to do independently without adult support. Consequently, activities often provide insufficient challenge for the most able children, who do not make as rapid progress in all areas of their learning as they could.
- Despite these weaknesses, leaders and managers have worked hard to secure improved outcomes for all children at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The number of children achieving a good level of development in 2014 increased. Phonics is taught well, and children are challenged in readiness for the next stage of their learning.

- Children are enthusiastic and eager to learn. They listen well and have a good relationship with adults and peers. Behaviour is good and children are encouraged to share ideas. As a result they feel safe and are confident. Children with special educational needs and disabilities are supported well. They make good progress from their starting points.

- Parents and carers are involved in settling in their child into Nursery and Reception. Information gathered from home visits contributes to the initial assessment of children's learning. As a result, positive relationships are quickly developed in readiness for the children's next stage of learning.

- Routines are well established. The early years provision is well resourced and children are given the opportunity to develop physically and emotionally through exploration and role play. Teachers and teaching assistants support learning well by asking open ended questions that encourage children to think.

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	110848
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	453753

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Williams
Headteacher	Jenny Overs
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2013
Telephone number	01480 398048
Fax number	01480 398049
Email address	office@stmarys.cambs.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

