

St Anthony's School

93 Belle Vue Road, Cinderford, GL14 2AA

Inspection dates 12–13 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Inadequate 4
Leadership and management	Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Requires improvement	3
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.

- Teaching over time has been inadequate. Leaders have been too slow to tackle weaknesses in the quality of teaching. As a result, not enough pupils achieve well and make good progress in reading, writing and, especially, mathematics.
- Leaders, including subject leaders, do not track pupils' progress effectively. They do not use information they collect about pupils' achievement and progress when evaluating teaching and learning.
- Leaders do not rigorously check the quality of teaching and learning. They do not hold teachers to account for the quality of their teaching and the achievement and progress of their pupils.
- Subject leaders lack the skills and training to monitor and improve their subjects. As a result, they do not have an accurate picture of how well pupils are learning. Leaders have an over-generous view of the school's performance.
- Some parent, say that leaders, including governors, do not respond promptly to their concerns. They do not always feel they are given appropriate information about their child's achievement and progress.
- Marking does not consistently support pupils to improve their work despite being undertaken regularly.
- Not all teachers challenge and inspire pupils to learn well. Pupils lose concentration and do not give of their best. Pupils' attitudes to learning require improvement.
- Teachers do not expect enough of their pupils; they set work that does not challenge pupils. As a result pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Pupils lack skills in using and applying their mathematical understanding. They are not being challenged to use and develop their thinking and understanding in this subject.
- Teachers lack sufficient guidance and direction as to how to apply the school's agreed strategies for improving learning. They do not always act on advice they have been given.
- Children in the early years do not make enough progress in writing and mathematics. Teachers do not tackle gaps in these areas of learning effectively.
- Until recently, governors have not closely checked the school's performance over time. The rate of improvement has been too slow.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are polite and courteous. They feel safe at school and trust adults to support and help them.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive well-planned and effective support.
- The school's Christian distinctiveness is at the heart of its caring ethos. Relationships between pupils and staff are good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes and attended a church service. She observed 11 lessons, or parts of lessons, of which two were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings and discussions were held with the headteacher, school leaders, teaching staff and governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- The inspector met with groups of pupils, listened to pupils reading and observed their behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's information on pupils' attainment and progress, work in pupils' books, teachers' planning and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safety. The school's self-evaluation and improvement plans and systems relating to the management of teachers' performance were also evaluated.
- The views of parents and carers were gained through 53 responses to the online Parent View survey, the school's own questionnaire and informal discussions with parents during the inspection.
- The views of 12 staff who responded to the staff questionnaire were also taken into account.
- The inspection took account of seven letters written by parents and given to the inspector during the inspection.

Inspection team

Catherine Leahy, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's 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 is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- St Anthony's School converted from an independent school to become a free school on 2 September 2013. When its predecessor school, also known as St Anthony's Convent School, was last inspected by Ofsted in October 2008, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school provides education for pupils from Nursery to Year 6. Children in the Nursery class attend part time. Children in the Reception class attend full time.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportions of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as additional language are both much lower than the respective national averages.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum standards set for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - planning lessons which inspire and challenge pupils to achieve high standards and which build on what pupils already know and understand
 - ensuring pupils improve their work as a result of teachers' marking
 - checking that pupils understand the guidance they have been given and are learning from this advice
 - ensuring all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - ensuring that children in the early years are fully supported to develop their learning in mathematics and writing.
- Improve pupils' progress and raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school by:
 - rapidly improving the quality of teaching of these subjects
 - ensuring that pupils are able to apply mathematical skills to develop their thinking and reasoning across the curriculum.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - implementing rigorous systems consistently to check the quality of teaching and learning
 - ensuring that all teachers respond to training and advice by improving their practice
 - providing training to develop leaders' skills so that leaders play a leading role in driving improvements in teaching and learning, including by challenging weak practice
 - making sure leaders are skilled in using assessment information to set work which enables all pupils to make good progress
 - ensuring parents receive appropriate information about their child's achievement and progress
 - ensuring governors hold leaders to account for improving the school by checking the quality and accuracy of the information they receive about the school's performance.

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 leadership and management are inadequate

- Leaders have been too slow to improve this school. They have not prioritised the need to rapidly improve the quality of teaching. They have not tackled known weaknesses in teaching with sufficient rigour. As a result, the quality of teaching is inconsistent and in some classes, inadequate. Too many pupils make inadequate progress in reading, writing and, especially, in mathematics. Half of parents who responded to the online questionnaire do not feel that the school is well led and managed.
- Leaders do not rigorously and systematically monitor the effectiveness of their planned actions. Consequently, they do not have an accurate picture of the school's performance. Their evaluation of the school's performance is over generous. It does not take account of the information they collect about pupils' progress and the quality of work in pupils' books. The school's records of the quality of teaching do not focus on pupils' learning and the progress made by all pupils. Leaders lack of focus on learning and progress is significantly slowing the pace of improvement.
- Leaders lack the skills and training necessary to improve teaching. Leaders do not check the impact of their actions. For example they do not ensure that teachers follow guidance provided on how to improve their teaching.
- Leaders do not hold teachers to account for pupils' progress. This means there is inconsistency across the school in the progress pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics. However, leaders have identified weaknesses in the delivery of their subjects.
- The inspector strongly recommends that the school should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- The school has implemented procedures for managing staff performance. However, teachers are not held to account for the progress of their pupils. This is limiting the impact of this process in improving standards quickly.
- Leaders plan a curriculum with teachers to ensure a broad range of subjects is being taught. Recent history topics in Year 5 and Year 1 were enriched when teachers brought the subjects alive, in one instance by staging a medieval banquet. As a result, the pupils spoke enthusiastically and wrote with feeling about what they had learnt. However, not all subjects interest and engage pupils in the same way. Not all teachers use the curriculum equally well to raise standards in literacy and numeracy for the pupils. This compromises the school's commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Pupils respect one another and adults. All staff encourage pupils to behave well. The school provides good opportunities to develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. For example, pupils have raised considerable amounts of money for charitable causes. They value opportunities to take part in cultural events such as playing at the Music for Youth Regional Music Festival. Pupils have a good understanding of other faiths and are tolerant of different beliefs. The school fosters good relationships and tackles discrimination. As a result, pupils' understanding of modern British values and how they relate to their everyday lives is developing well.
- Not all teachers plan lessons to specifically address the needs of disadvantaged pupils and those with disabilities and special educational needs. As a result, there is inconsistency in the achievement of these groups of pupils across the school. However, the leader responsible for disadvantaged pupils and those with disabilities and special educational needs has introduced efficient systems to systematically check and evaluate the impact of the support these pupils receive. This is having a positive impact in developing their literacy and numeracy skills.
- The school uses the government sport funding to improve provision for physical education. For example, school staff have organised skipping days for all pupils. Staff have also set up gymnastics and running clubs to develop the skills of pupils showing talent in these sports. This provision is encouraging more pupils to participate in sport. It is also increasing pupils' awareness of living a healthy lifestyle.
- All safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory requirements. However, governors know their record-keeping systems require improvement in order to be of good quality. Leaders have created a safe and calm environment. They give careful consideration to ensuring pupils are safe when using the many flights of stairs. Pupils say they feel safe at school and enjoy attending. As a result, attendance is good.
- The school receives no support from the local authority. The headteacher has been proactive in seeking support from local networks and in 'buying in' to training sessions led by the local authority and other providers. This enables teachers to develop their skills and knowledge. The school received external analysis of their data in December 2014. This resulted in training in mathematics for a member of staff. However, this support has not helped to drive improvement quickly enough.
- Some parents who completed the online questionnaire reported that they are not given appropriate information about their child's achievement and progress. Just under half felt that the school does not

respond well to concerns. Several also wrote or spoke to the inspector about similar issues.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are committed to improving this school. They have worked tirelessly to overcome the significant challenges of setting up a new school in September 2013. However, they recognise that, until recently, their work has not focused on rapidly improving the school's performance. Some governors are new and have not yet received sufficient training. They have not challenged leaders about the underachievement or checked that actions taken to improve teaching are making a difference to pupils' outcomes. As a result, they do not have a detailed understanding of the quality of teaching or achievement and progress across the school. Improvements have been too slow.
- Governors rely on information given to them by the headteacher. Although they visit the school regularly, they do not check the validity and accuracy of the information they receive. Minutes from governors' meetings show governors do not rigorously hold leaders to account. They are now asking more challenging questions. They are not, however, assiduously following up underperformance to ensure that actions taken are making a difference.
- Governors are knowledgeable about how additional funding is being spent. However, they do not carefully check that it is making a positive difference to the progress of disadvantaged pupils. They do check the impact of the sport funding to ensure pupils benefit from this provision.
- The governing body oversees the process used to hold teachers and the headteacher to account. However, they do not expect enough of their leaders. They have not used this process successfully to tackle underperformance. This hinders the pace of improvement.
- Governors manage tight finances well. The governing body's work to keep pupils safe and secure meets statutory requirements. The governors have undertaken appropriate training which is developing their skills and knowledge.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Too often they lose focus in class and revert to off-task chatter, particularly where activities fail to capture their interest. This is compounded when tasks lack challenge because work is not set at the right level.
- Pupils behave well at break times and around the school. They are polite and courteous to each other and to adults. Strong Christian values underpin the work of the school. This has a positive impact in developing respectful and caring relationships between all members of the school community.
- Leaders record any incidents of poor behaviour and follow up the actions they take. Most parents agree the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved. There have been no exclusions.
- Older pupils eat lunch with the youngest pupils in the school. They act as positive role models who contribute to this being a happy and well-organised social time.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. Leaders, including governors, ensure pupils are safe in school. However, systems to record governors' meetings relating to safeguarding, need to be formalised.
- Pupils know about different forms of bullying. They have confidence in staff to resolve any incidents successfully. Pupils told the inspector they trust adults to help them if needed.
- The school is diligent in developing pupils' awareness of e-safety. Pupils spoke with confidence about keeping safe on the internet as a result of the teaching they receive.
- Attendance levels are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are punctual and treat their school with respect. The site is tidy and litter free.
- Almost all parents who responded to the online questionnaire, or spoke to the inspector, say their children are safe in school.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Over time, the quality of teaching has been inadequate. The leadership of teaching and learning is too weak to improve teaching quickly. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they could in reading and writing and, especially, in mathematics.
- Teachers do not consistently challenge and inspire pupils to work hard and achieve well. They do not use

the detailed information they collect about what pupils already know and understand to plan the next steps of learning. Some pupils find the work, including homework, too easy or too hard, which prevents them achieving well.

- Some teachers do not expect enough of their pupils so they do not build on their previous knowledge and understanding. Consequently, lessons are not challenging enough and as a result, pupils do not develop their skills and understanding in sufficient depth.
- The teaching of mathematics gives particular cause for concern. Work in pupils' books and information held by the school demonstrate significant underachievement. Too many pupils have made inadequate progress in this subject.
- The curriculum does not support pupils to develop their skills in reading, writing and mathematics well enough. The school has very recently introduced problem-solving activities in mathematics. However, the impact of this development has yet to be seen. The inspector saw examples of good quality writing, especially when linked to subjects which sparked pupils' imagination, such as the Saxons. However, elsewhere, pupils did not write to this high standard or show this level of enthusiasm for their work.
- Not all teachers routinely question pupils to encourage them to think deeply. This slows the pace of learning. However, some teachers use questioning well to check pupils' understanding of skills and knowledge.
- Pupils do not routinely act on advice given in teachers' marking despite its regularity. Teachers do not intervene effectively to stretch and challenge pupils' thinking. Consequently, pupils are not able to make the best possible progress.
- The teaching of phonics in the early years and Year 1 is effective. However, some pupils in other year groups, particularly those who struggle with reading, do not consistently apply their knowledge of letters and sounds to read unfamiliar words. The school has invested in a range of fiction which encourages pupils to be enthusiastic and skilled readers. Nonetheless, some pupils remain uninspired by the texts they encounter in lessons. These fail to capture their imagination or challenge them to think deeply. This slows progress for some pupils.
- Teachers do not always guide teaching assistants to support pupils' learning in whole class lessons. They are more effective when they support pupils with special educational needs. In these lessons pupils with special educational needs make the progress of which they are capable.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- From their starting points, too many pupils in Years 2 to 6 do not make enough progress. This is particularly the case in mathematics. Checks carried out during the inspection on pupils' work and on the school's progress data and observations of pupils' learning in lessons, confirm this picture.
- Pupils perform above the national average in the Year 1 phonic screening check. Daily teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) builds on the progress made in the Nursery and Reception classes. Pupils up to Year 1 use this learning to help them tackle unfamiliar words and become more confident readers. Older pupils talk confidently about their favourite books and authors. However, not all continue to apply their phonic knowledge to more challenging texts.
- Standards of attainment in 2014 in reading, writing and mathematics, combined, were below the national average in Year 6. This was also the case at the end of Year 2. Writing and mathematics seen in books during the inspection, including in Year 6, do not demonstrate that pupils are making better progress this year.
- Achievement of the most able pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is too variable across the school. Although some of these pupils reach higher levels of attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, their progress towards these final assessments is very uneven. They are capable of much more, but are not sufficiently stretched and challenged throughout their time in school.
- Most pupils with special educational needs make good progress relative to their starting points. They receive well-planned support which carefully meets their needs. The leader for special educational needs evaluates their progress and amends support when required. This enables them to achieve well.
- Pupils who are learning English as an additional language make good progress because they have their needs carefully assessed. They receive appropriate support to ensure they catch up and achieve standards of which they are capable.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to their peers; those who join the school with significant underachievement receive good support to catch up. There were too few disadvantaged pupils in 2014 to make comparisons between their test results and those of their peers in school or pupils nationally.

The early years provision**requires improvement**

- The early years provision requires improvement. Leaders are not concentrating on supporting children's development in the areas they have identified as less well developed, for example mathematics and writing. Leaders do not use assessment information sufficiently well to plan children's precise next steps of learning. As a result, children make less progress in these specific areas of learning.
- Children join the school in the Nursery at levels which are typical for their age, especially in personal and social skills and understanding the world. In some areas of learning, such as understanding the world, children achieve expected outcomes for their age and make better progress.
- Parents appreciate the induction programme planned by staff. This enables the children to make a seamless transition from home to Nursery and Nursery to Reception. They settle well with their teacher and teaching assistant's support. Children transferring into Reception get to work quickly and build on the learning secured in the Nursery.
- Teachers identify children with special educational needs quickly and give appropriate support. This enables these children to settle quickly.
- Staff in both classes use appropriate systems to check children's progress throughout the year. These include detailed records of learning. These assessments provide information to plan children's next steps of learning. However, leaders do not use this information sufficiently well to plan learning.
- Not enough children are on track to reach a good level of development in writing. Children learn letters and the sounds they make during their time in Nursery and Reception. They make expected progress in their reading.
- Staff communicate with parents at the start and end of each day. A daily 'communication book' provides a link between home and school. However, teachers do not share with parents the high quality information held electronically to further strengthen the home and school links.
- Children behave well in Nursery and Reception classes. Staff make their expectations clear. Children understand the rules and routines, which results in a calm, safe and well-ordered learning environment. Children in the Nursery demonstrated great excitement and enjoyment of learning when observing a hornet in a sealed jar eating fruit. The teacher used this opportunity to develop children's speech and language skills and their understanding of the world.
- By the end of the Reception year, children cooperate well together and learn to work independently. Children are well prepared for their transfer to Year 1.
- Safeguarding practice in the early years is good. Adults follow agreed procedures which ensure this setting keeps children safe.

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	140202
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	450118

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	132
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Nick Hyde
Headteacher	Mrs Julie James
Date of previous school inspection	23 October 2008
Telephone number	01594823558
Email address	head@stanthonys.gloucs.sck.uk

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