

St James Church of England Junior School

Upton Street, Gloucester, Gloucestershire, GL1 4JU

Inspection dates 7–8 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are not improving as rapidly as they should across the school.
- Some teachers' expectations of the most able pupils are too low and their skills are not extended sufficiently in topic work.
- Teachers do not always use what they know about pupils to set work that is at the right level of challenge.
- The use of problem-solving and investigations to deepen pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding is not yet established in all classes.
- Pupils do not have a clear understanding of what they have achieved or how they can improve their work because marking is not always thorough.
- Pupils do not always have enough time to follow up teachers' marking and make improvements to their work.
- The governing body have not insured that pupils' achievement has improved in all classes.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has successfully driven vital improvements in teaching in order to raise pupils' achievement.
- The school makes sure that pupils are safe and well cared for at all times.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work, their relationships, respect and tolerance of others are good and make a positive contribution to their progress.
- Members of the governing body are now skilled in holding the school to account for its work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited an assembly and 14 lessons. The headteacher joined inspectors for two observations. Inspectors also examined the quality of work in pupils’ books.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour in lessons, around the school and at break and lunchtimes. They had formal and informal discussions with pupils and met with the school council.
- Inspectors took account of the 10 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the school’s own survey of parents’ views. Inspectors also considered the 18 responses to the staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors met with parents, the headteacher, other school leaders, a group of governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at school documents, including information about pupils’ achievement, records of behaviour and attendance, records of monitoring, school self-evaluation, plans for improvement, and information relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Lynne Bradbury, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Westall

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. The largest groups are of White British and Indian heritage. The majority of pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support from the pupil premium is higher than average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is higher than the national average.
- In 2014, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The current headteacher took up her position in September 2014 and most governors have joined the school since the last inspection.
- The school received a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) inspection in July 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and achievement by ensuring that:
 - work is set at the right level of challenge for all pupils
 - all pupils apply their skills in reading, writing and mathematics across other subjects
 - the most able pupils read more complex texts, read for research, and organise and structure their own written work
 - the most able pupils deepen their understanding of mathematics through problem solving and investigations of real-life contexts
 - pupils who find mathematics more difficult develop confidence in basic calculation skills
 - pupils' work is marked regularly and thoroughly so that pupils know what they have to do to improve
 - pupils always make the necessary improvements to their work.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - all staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - middle leaders make a greater impact upon raising achievement through their checks on the quality of teaching.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because a legacy of low expectations has hindered pupils' achievement.
- Middle leaders do not have enough impact on the progress of all pupils.
- The range of subjects taught does not enable pupils to develop the full breadth of skills required by the National Curriculum. Activities are not always as challenging as they should be and pupils do not extend their reading, writing and mathematics skills through their topic work.
- The headteacher and governors now have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school, and this is beginning to raise achievement in most classes. All members of staff share the headteacher's drive for urgent improvement.
- Governors and senior leaders have introduced robust measures and rigorous checks to improve outcomes for all pupils. These measures have been effective in improving pupils' progress in the majority of classes this year.
- Subject leaders' skills have improved rapidly during this school year and they have worked with determination to address weaknesses.
- Staff are held to account for pupils' achievement because leaders are using the school's management of performance systems more effectively than in the past. Leaders measure teachers' success against the progress pupils make and ensure that teachers' training needs are met. This has led to an improvement in teaching and pupils' achievement this year.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide one-to-one support and small-group tuition, and to enable disadvantaged pupils to go on school outings. As a result, gaps in attainment for these pupils, compared with other pupils in school and pupils nationally, are closing.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding provides good coaching for sports lessons, clubs, and training for staff. Pupils greatly enjoy the wide range of clubs and activities offered.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is effective and is a focus for the school's work. The emphasis in all assemblies and lessons on respect, tolerance and traditional British values is recognised by the pupils as a highly valued part of their school life. Pupils have visited various places of worship, including the church, a mosque and a synagogue. This has helped pupils to understand and respect the beliefs of others. Pupils of all faiths were keen to tell inspectors that they learn a great deal from studying others' beliefs. They said that their understanding of life in modern Britain is supported by these exciting visits.
- Safeguarding is effective in keeping pupils safe and meets statutory requirements.
- The local authority is working closely with the headteacher to improve the school through continued monitoring and support.
- The school's commitment to equal opportunities is shown in leaders' improved checks on the achievement of pupils of all backgrounds and abilities. These have ensured that the achievement of disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, and those receiving support through the pupil premium funding has improved. However, the school is aware that more has to be done to improve achievement overall and in particular the achievement of most able pupils.
- Discrimination in any form is not tolerated and there is a clear commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all. Pupils from all backgrounds are highly valued, have the same good opportunities to succeed, and are fully included all the school does. Staff give good support to any pupils who experience difficulties.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body took part in a local authority review in September 2013. As a result, they re-formed in order to ensure an appropriate range of professional skills to support governor roles. Since the review, governors have undertaken a wide range of training which has enabled them to hold the school properly to account. Governors now oversee the work of the school much more effectively and this is leading to improvement in all the areas identified in the last inspection. They recognise that these improvements have not yet had time to impact fully on pupils' achievement.
 - Governors undertake rigorous checks. They visit lessons and measure a wide range of information about pupils' achievement to identify where the school needs to improve. Together with the headteacher, they have developed a rigorous system for the management of staff performance that informs any decisions related to pay progression. This is having a positive impact on raising the quality of teaching.

- Governors manage the budget well to address the areas which need to improve and they check that additional funds, such as the pupil premium, are used effectively.
- Governors ensure that all statutory safeguarding requirements are met in full.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are very proud of their school and the respectful and tolerant relationships between the many different cultural and faith groups in school. They show a high level of care and support for those pupils who have different points of view or who experience difficulties.
- Pupils' positive attitudes make an important contribution to their good progress and to the family atmosphere in school. Pupils' workbooks generally reflect hard work and pride in their work.
- Most, but not all, pupils behave well in their lessons, around the school and in the playground. When they work together in groups, most pupils listen to each other and challenge each other's ideas, and this moves their learning forward
- Records of behaviour problems in school are regularly analysed to check that all pupils receive good support. Pupils confirmed that serious problems are now rare and are dealt with firmly and effectively.
- Pupils and the majority of parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with the work of the school and the way in which teachers manage pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils greatly appreciate the praise and rewards for working hard, and the way in which this is celebrated with their classmates. Pupils respond positively because staff know them personally and understand their difficulties.
- The attendance policy is implemented rigorously. This has helped to improve their attendance of some pupils who had difficulty in this area.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- All adults ensure that pupils are safe and take particular care for pupils in most need. All members of staff and appropriate governors are trained in child protection and safeguarding requirements. Systematic checks are carried out on all visitors and new members of staff.
- Pupils understand the various forms of bullying, including name-calling, and the risks concerned with using the internet and new technologies. They say that bullying has reduced in school and is quickly dealt with on the rare occasions when it happens. Pupils say that they feel safe and trust staff to help them if they need it.
- Leaders use effective systems to assess and record risks within school and in outside activities or visits, to ensure these aspects of school life are safe.
- Pupils display a good understanding of the kind of dangers which may arise outside school from extremist views within some parts of society or in talking to strangers, and they know how to keep themselves safe in such situations.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because pupils' work is not always at an appropriate level of challenge or support. Some staff do not have high enough expectations of pupils' work. Although there are examples of some high quality practice, teaching is not consistently good across all classes.
- Pupils do not always develop their reading skills through research in wider subjects. The teaching of mathematics is improving in most classes. However, most able pupils do not always apply their skills when solving problems or investigations. Pupils who find mathematics difficult do not always work on their basic calculation skills. This means that some most able pupils are not stretched to achieve mastery of their mathematics, and that some pupils who find this subject more difficult are not as confident as they should be. Some pupils apply their writing skills in extended pieces of work, but this is not consistent in all classes.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are warm, trusting and respectful, and most staff follow the policy for rewards and sanctions in school. This leads to a warm and friendly atmosphere, with ample opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their own learning and behaviour.
- Homework supports learning well in reading, writing, basic number skills and preparing for topics.

- Most pupils are actively engaged in group work and discussion because they understand the purpose of their learning and what they must do to succeed.
- Skilful questioning in most classes deepens pupils' understanding. It also helps clarify how well pupils have grasped new learning and whether the work is set at the right level.
- Pupils make rapid progress when marking is thorough and the areas for improvement are clear. However, this is not always the case and this hampers pupils' progress.
- Most teaching assistants are well trained and make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress by breaking work down into smaller steps.
- Pupils with identified social and emotional needs are given very high quality support which helps them to make good progress.
- Pupils develop high levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness because they reflect on their learning in lessons and how they could improve. They work in collaboration with pupils from a wide range of backgrounds, faiths and cultures and study the experiences of people around the world, and discuss right and wrong in many contexts.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The achievement of pupils requires improvement. In 2014, Year 6 pupils reached average standards in reading, writing and mathematics, and a little above average in English spelling, grammar and punctuation. Too few pupils reached the higher levels in mathematics. Many of the pupils in the year had complex needs and difficulties.
- Pupils are not yet making enough progress in subjects other than English and mathematics. They have very exciting and interesting experiences through visits, visitors or special experiences, but these are not always followed up in order to deepen their understanding or help pupils gain more advanced skills.
- Achievement information and work in pupils' books in reading, writing and mathematics show that pupils currently in school are making much better progress in most year groups, and are on track to achieve higher standards.
- The level of challenge is not always high enough to ensure that the most able pupils make rapid progress. Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make rapid progress because their difficulties are identified early, their achievement is carefully checked, and they are given the right level of extra support. However, this is not always the case and, as a result, a few disabled pupils or pupils who have special educational needs do not always make consistently good progress.
- In Year 6 in 2014, disadvantaged pupils were just over a term behind their peers in school in mathematics, reading, and writing, and just over a term and a half behind in English spelling, punctuation and grammar. They were just over two terms behind other pupils nationally in mathematics, two and a half terms behind in reading, one term behind in writing, and a term behind in English, spelling, punctuation and grammar. Although many of these pupils had significant and complex difficulties, the gaps had narrowed from previous years. Tracking information and pupils' books show that these gaps are continuing to close.
- During the inspection, it was evident that pupils' achievement in reading is beginning to improve in most classes. Pupils were keen to share their reading and to talk about their books. However, there are still a minority of pupils who have yet to develop their reading for understanding and their analysis of the text in wider subject areas or more complex texts.

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	115606
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	462658

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robin Bown
Headteacher	Angela Anderton
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 June 2013
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