

Datchet St Mary's C of E Primary School

The Green, Datchet, Slough, Berkshire SL3 9EJ

Inspection dates	5–6 July 2016
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Changes in staffing and leadership have hampered improvements since the last inspection.
- Too many pupils do not make good progress because of inconsistencies in teaching.
- There are sometimes weaknesses in how teachers prepare suitable work for different abilities, in the feedback they give pupils, and in how they check their learning in lessons. At times, teaching assistants are not used efficiently.
- Attendance is too low, despite improvements over this year.
- Governors and other leaders have not ensured that all staff consistently implement the many good systems, put in place this year, to support teaching, pupils' learning and the curriculum.
- Much of the information provided on the school's website is out of date.
- The school does not translate its effective safeguarding practice promptly enough into written policies and other paperwork.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' conduct, in lessons and around the school, is good. Pupils enjoy school, and get on well with each other and with their teachers.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Children get off to a good start in early years. Good teaching ensures good progress.
- The high priority given to pupils' welfare ensures they are safe.
- Senior leaders and governors have set clear direction to colleagues. They have put in place good systems, which are beginning to improve teaching and learning. Progress is improving for many pupils as a result.
- A new assessment system to keep track of pupils' progress helps teachers to plan their lessons better, and shows leaders how well different groups of pupils are getting on.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress and so raise standards, by ensuring that teachers more consistently:
 - prepare activities, for all groups of pupils, that interest and challenge them, particularly for the most able
 - check that pupils act on the feedback adults give them, and ensure that it makes a difference to their progress
 - check regularly on the progress of pupils during lessons, so that they can provide extra support and challenge promptly, when this is required
 - deploy teaching assistants effectively to support pupils' engagement and learning throughout the lesson.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - leaders at all levels, including governors, consistently ensure that systems to improve teaching and learning are fully implemented throughout the school, and teachers are given support in doing this when needed; in particular, involve all subject leaders more in this process
 - attendance is improved, particularly for those individuals who have very low attendance, by extending the work done with particular families to help them reduce their children's absence
 - the school's website is kept up to date so that the information available, for parents in particular, is more accurate
 - the policies and other paperwork to support keeping pupils safe are more promptly updated so they reflect the school's good procedures and practice.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The many changes in staffing have slowed improvements since the last inspection. Although, this year, the new executive headteacher and head of school have introduced good systems, to improve teaching and learning in particular, these are not consistently implemented across the school.
- Subject leaders have not played a strong enough part in driving improvements. The senior leaders have made their expectations clear, but there has not been enough challenge and support to teachers to help them meet these expectations. The leaders for mathematics and English have played an increasingly effective role in helping their colleagues to improve practice this year, but other leaders have had too little opportunity to make much impact. The early years provision is managed well, as is the provision to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school provides some useful information to parents. There is a wide range of information available on the website, but much of this is out of date and does not properly reflect the school as it is now. The website does not make reference to up-to-date policies that reflect current practice. This means that parents lack some information, or may even be misled by what they access on the site.
- This term, the school has improved attendance, which has gone up overall but still remains below average. Staff have done some very good work with particular families to help them get their children to school more regularly and more often. This work has been tailored well to individual circumstances. The popular breakfast club, for example, has contributed to lowering absence for some pupils. However, there remain a number of individuals whose attendance is too low, with a detrimental effect on their learning. The school needs to extend its work to challenge or support these pupils' families to help them raise their children's attendance.
- The senior leaders have created a culture where all staff are keen to promote pupils' learning. Teamwork is strong. Although some staff have been less successful than others in implementing the school's new systems to improve learning, all share in the desire to give pupils a better deal. Teaching is improving, in response to a good programme of training that helps teachers meet the professional targets they are set. Pay progression is tightly linked to how successfully teachers perform.
- The school has designed a curriculum that meets the requirements of the new national curriculum. It has a strong focus on English and mathematics, while providing for a good range of other subjects, including French, for example. There is particularly good provision for older pupils to learn a musical instrument. However, apart from English and mathematics, the extent to which many subjects are studied in depth is variable. Work in pupils' books suggests that learning is sometimes superficial, without provision for pupils to really deepen their understanding. There is some provision for pupils to improve and apply their writing skills in other subjects, but this is not consistent. There is a good range of after-school clubs, which pupils in Year 6, in particular, were very positive about.
- A good system to assess pupils' progress against the new curriculum has been introduced. This is used well by leaders to check the progress of different groups and classes, and to address any shortcomings that are identified. It also provides teachers with extensive information about how well pupils in their classes are progressing, and if there are any particular areas of weakness. This gives teachers a strong basis for planning to meet pupils' different needs.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong, and underpins the positive, warm ethos around the school. Pupils are given a good understanding of moral and social values, including British values. For example, they learn about democracy through elections to the school council, and their understanding of rules and consequences teaches them an appreciation of the rule of law. They are very tolerant of each other and of different classmates' needs and interests. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Increasingly good use is made of the pupil premium to support disadvantaged pupils. A range of support for pupils' academic and social needs is in place, and funding is used to help all pupils be fully included in different aspects of school life. The current senior leaders have closely evaluated the impact of existing strategies. They have expanded successful approaches, and are ceasing to use less successful methods. This year, in consequence, disadvantaged pupils are making the same overall progress as others.
- Good use has been made of the sports premium to expand the range of activities available. Pupils' participation has increased, and they show great enthusiasm for the range of sports they can now practise.
- The school has received useful advice and support from the diocesan team to validate its judgements, and to source extra training.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors are keen to support the school and have an increasingly good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They are willing to challenge leaders about issues that arise and have ensured that the school's practice is designed to make improvements. For example, they have checked that different groups make similar progress, and that the staff are devising strategies to address gaps in performance. However, they have not been successful in checking that leaders ensure that all the school's strategies are put into practice consistently. Governors have generally ensured that leaders and staff address new regulations and government requirements that arise, for example in safeguarding. However, they are often slow in getting the new practice embedded into the relevant paperwork.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a strong emphasis on this from leaders and governors, and staff share this priority. The school is very much aware of pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable and is vigilant in checking on them and providing support. Leaders establish good links with parents and with outside agencies, and respond promptly and appropriately to any concerns. Staff follow up issues properly. Regular training keeps staff up to date; they know how to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism, for example. However, some of the school's policies, while staff follow them well, are still officially in draft form because they have not been ratified promptly by governors. Some records of concerns had not been collated properly in the past, although most of these shortcomings have recently been addressed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because its quality is too variable to help all pupils make good progress. Aspects of teaching, which are strong in some classes, lessons or subjects, are weaknesses in others. Although the school's leaders have accurately identified these, and are helping colleagues to improve their practice by addressing the weaknesses, too many inconsistencies remain.
- Teachers' use of the school's new assessment system to plan work at the right level for different pupils is inconsistent. Sometimes this is done well, so pupils find the work interesting and challenging; they concentrate well and make good progress. At its best, teaching challenges the most able to think deeply, and they respond very positively and make rapid progress. In other lessons, however, work is not set at the right level for all groups.
- Occasionally, work is too hard for some pupils and this slows their progress. This problem is often overcome when skilled teaching assistants provide help for these pupils to cope. A bigger problem occurs when work lacks challenge and pupils find the activities dull as a result. In such cases, their progress is too slow and their concentration lapses. This is a particular problem for the most able pupils, who too often do the same work as the middle section of the class, and are not challenged to reach the high standards of which they are capable.
- There is too much variability in the effectiveness with which the adults keep a close check on how pupils are doing, intervene to correct any misconceptions, or challenge pupils to improve their work. Sometimes this is done well. At other times, the adults do not check in a timely enough way on all groups, so that some pupils make too little progress because they have not really understood what is wanted.
- The deployment of teaching assistants is erratic. Teachers often use them very effectively to monitor pupils' progress, to help those who struggle with academic work and to challenge others. This is a particular strength in the early years. Teaching assistants also make a strong contribution to helping those pupils who struggle with their behaviour to meet the expectations of the school, and to make progress. However, at times, the extra adults in class are not actively involved and spent too much of the lesson observing the teacher teach.
- In response to the school's policy, teachers now regularly provide pupils with short, timetabled sessions to review teachers' feedback and to address it. At times, this is very productive, and improvements are apparent in pupils' subsequent work. However, not all teachers check carefully enough on the impact of these sessions, and sometimes pupils' work shows little sign of improvement. Sometimes, when pupils are asked to do extra practise in a weak area, they do not succeed with this, but there is little indication that this is then addressed.
- The teaching of phonics (how letter combinations in words represent different sounds) is a strength of the school. This gives pupils a firm start on reading. Despite variations in progress, by the end of the school, teachers have engendered a clear enthusiasm for books in pupils. Handwriting is taught well and,

by the middle of key stage 2, most pupils write in a clear joined hand, drawing on their phonics knowledge to help their spelling.

- In many lessons, teachers make good use of discussion that involves all pupils in the activities, helps them sort out their ideas, and develops their social skills as well as their speaking and listening.
- Classes are managed well. Teachers make expectations of behaviour clear, and pupils respond quickly to teachers' instructions. Routines are well established and pupils follow them well. Even if pupils are not engaged because they do not find work interesting or challenging, and they lose concentration, they seldom behave disruptively.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school successfully promotes a positive social ethos where all pupils are valued as individuals, whatever their abilities or circumstances. Pupils show care for each other, and a group of Year 6 pupils agreed that the friendliness of other children and the care from staff helped ensure they were happy and safe in school.
- Tolerance and care for others permeate many of the interactions in school. Pupils value each other's different opinions and heritages, and enjoy learning about other countries and religions. They have a strong moral understanding based on the school's values. Older pupils enjoy their role of helping to look after younger children.
- The school is pro-active in identifying any pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable. These pupils are monitored carefully and the school works with their families to make sure they get the right pastoral support in school, and are settled and happy there.
- Pupils are confident that the school keeps them safe, and reach a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet. They have learned about bullying and say it is increasingly rare. They are very confident that staff will deal well with any incidents, and say they know their friends would support them if they had problems.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Although pupils' conduct in lessons and elsewhere is generally positive, their attendance remains too low. The enjoyment that many pupils have for school is not translated into good attendance for too many of them. The school has worked successfully to improve the attendance of some individuals, but has acknowledged that some pupils will need much more support to ensure that they attend regularly enough to make acceptable levels of progress.
- Pupils generally concentrate well in class and work hard, although some lose interest if they find work uninteresting. This can slow their progress.
- Pupils are friendly, polite and cheerful. They take an increasing interest in succeeding academically, and are proud of themselves if they do well.
- Pupils agreed that behaviour was usually good and, that when pupils did misbehave, this would be addressed successfully by their teachers. They understand and respect the rewards and sanctions in place to promote good behaviour.
- Good behaviour was seen in the breakfast club, which provides a sociable and relaxing start to the day for those who attend.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils' progress is too erratic across the school to be good overall. This is because of differences in the quality of teaching from class to class, and from lesson to lesson. There are differences between different classes, but also differences between subjects in each class.
- Although there is no overall difference between the progress made by different groups, there is variability from class to class. For example, the school's information shows that girls do better than boys in some subjects in some classes, but the position is reversed in other classes and subjects.

- For many pupils, their overall progress during much of their time in school is close to that expected, but there are too many gaps over time for it to be good overall. Provisional information shows that the proportion of pupils who have reached the expected levels in the new statutory assessments at the end of Year 6 this year is below the national average.
- The most able pupils do not always make the progress they should. There are good examples of them achieving really high standards when they are challenged and interested, but this is not consistent because, too often, work is too easy for them. Their progress across the school shows the same variation as that of other groups.
- Disadvantaged pupils make the same variable progress as their classmates, for the same reasons. They do not fall any further behind, because of the increasingly effective use of pupil premium funding to give individuals help, support and challenge in a way that the school tailors to their particular needs.
- The pupils from different ethnic groups, including those of Gypsy/Roma heritage, make the same variable progress as their classmates. Some do well, but others' progress requires improvement because of the variation in teaching quality they encounter.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language learn English well, and get effective support in this. The school's records show that, once they have a secure grasp of the language, they make the same mixed progress as others, for the same reasons.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities often make good progress. The provision for them is well managed and skilled teaching assistants often provide the right balance of challenge and support to help them succeed.
- Children in the early years get off to a good start in their education in both Nursery and Reception. By the end of the Reception Year, standards are at least in line with the national average and are rising. Last year, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development rose, and was above average. The school's information on progress shows standards will rise again this year.
- Pupils make good progress in phonics, and attain good scores in the annual check in Year 1.

Early years provision

is good

- The early years provision is well managed. The leader ensures that there is strong teamwork in both Reception and Nursery, and staff work together effectively to provide children with a safe, stimulating environment where they feel secure and happy.
- Children make good progress because of good teaching. When adults provide direct teaching to children, they do this well, ensuring through questioning that they match their explanations to children's understanding. When children choose their own activities, adults frequently intervene in play, encouraging children to talk about what they are doing, and extending their vocabulary and thinking. Extra funding to support the progress of disadvantaged children is used effectively.
- The warm, positive relationships which adults have with children and their parents ensure that children feel safe and happy in the setting, and can enjoy playing and learning. Children's welfare needs are met well and, as in the rest of the school, staff provide tailored help and support to those who need it.
- A wide range of interesting activities is provided, indoors and out, that children take a delight in. They enthusiastically crush herbs using a pestle and mortar, for example, share books, or play with water.
- Good use is made of the outdoors, which has a range of interesting equipment, including climbing apparatus, wheeled vehicles and a range of other toys and equipment. However, much of the equipment is rather old, and starting to look tired and faded. The school has ambitious plans to refurbish the outdoor area during the summer holiday.
- Children behave well in the setting, and staff continually and gently model good manners and attitudes to children. Adults quickly sort out any minor squabbles before they get out of hand, encouraging children to think of others, to be polite, to share fairly, and to say 'sorry' if they transgress. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development gets off to a good start.
- Good ongoing monitoring of children's progress is used well to keep track of how they are doing, and to plan activities that meet their needs and interests. Because this is largely gathered electronically, it has the potential to be shared with parents, and is also designed to translate meaningfully into the assessment system used in the rest of the school.
- Children's good progress, enjoyment of school, positive relationships with each other and their good behaviour, mean they are well prepared for the move into Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	117788
Local authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	10012320

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	276
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally-Ann Jarvis
Headteacher	Rob Harris
Telephone number	01753 542 982
Website	datchetstmarysacademy.webplus.net
Email address	office@datchetstmarysacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–27 June 2014

Information about this school

- The school is a little larger than the average primary school. There is one class in each age group, including a full-time Reception class, except in Year 1, where there are two classes. There is a part-time Nursery, where children attend either mornings or afternoons.
- About half of the pupils are of White British origin, with the others coming from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The two largest groups are of Indian or Gypsy/Roma heritage. About a fifth of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium grant is below average. The pupil premium is extra government funding to help the education of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- About a fifth of pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- There has been considerable change to staffing since the last inspection. In September 2015, an executive headteacher was appointed, to lead this school and another local school for this academic year. At the same time, a new deputy headteacher took up post, and acts as head of school when the executive headteacher is not present. It is planned to appoint another executive headteacher from next September. There have been considerable changes to other teaching staff in the last two years. The school is considering becoming a member of a multi-academy trust next year.
- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils from Reception to Year 6.
- The school's information on the website meets the obligations set out in its funding agreement, although much of the content is out of date.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes, as well as visiting playtimes, breakfast club and assembly.
- The team analysed work in pupils' books, heard pupils read, and checked on displays around the school.
- Inspectors held formal discussions with staff, representatives of the governing body, groups of pupils and a representative of the diocese. The team also chatted informally with pupils around the school.
- The team took account of the 65 replies received to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- A variety of documentation was examined. There was a particular focus on that related to keeping pupils safe, and information about pupils' attainment and progress.

Inspection team

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Anne Allen	Ofsted Inspector

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