

St Anthony's School

93 Belle Vue Road, Cinderford, Gloucestershire GL14 2AA

Inspection dates

6–7 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Special measures

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Turbulence in leadership has resulted in a continued decline in the school's performance. The areas for improvement identified at the previous section 5 inspection have not been successfully tackled. The school remains in special measures.
- Leaders of the school have not demonstrated the capacity to bring about the urgently required improvements. A picture of low aspiration, weak challenge and restricted expectation has typified pupils' experiences.
- Governors have not carried out their statutory responsibilities or maintained an appropriate oversight of the school. Until very recently, pupils and staff have not been comprehensively safeguarded.
- The school's finances have not been well-managed. There are not sufficient resources to support teaching or to ensure that basic safety requirements are being adhered to.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is weak. Information about pupils' prior knowledge, skills and understanding is not used to plan activities that meet their needs.
- The curriculum is poorly designed and hampers, rather than helps, pupils' achievement. Children in Reception are not provided with their statutory entitlement to an early years curriculum.
- Pupils' knowledge of phonics, and how it is used to help them read and write well, is weak. The teaching of writing is not well planned.
- Teaching and the curriculum in mathematics do not enable enough pupils to reason and solve mathematical problems successfully.
- Too many pupils are not being equipped with the right skills to be a successful learner. Many demonstrate a lack of pride in the presentation of their work.
- Low-level disruption is prevalent in too many classes. Pupils are slow to settle to their learning and on too many occasions become over-excitable and display immature attitudes to their work and to other children.
- Parents are concerned about how well the school deals with bullying and promotes pupils' good behaviour. Absence is higher than average.

The school has the following strengths

- The current headteacher has made a determined start to tackle the many problems that the school faces.
- Some pupils in Years 5 and 6 are beginning to catch up on lost learning. They enjoy the leadership roles now made available to them.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and, therefore, pupils' outcomes by:
 - raising teachers' expectations and the level of challenge provided for all pupils
 - making better use of assessment information to plan tasks that meet pupils' academic and personal needs
 - developing teachers' subject knowledge across the full range of subjects
 - training staff on the effective teaching of phonics.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that governors have the skills and qualities needed to hold senior leaders to account for all aspects of the school's work, including finance
 - monitoring pupils' progress and using the findings to improve teaching, the curriculum and pupils' outcomes
 - planning a curriculum that builds coherently on pupils' knowledge, skill and understanding and better meets pupils' learning needs
 - developing the skills and impact of middle leaders
 - ensuring that the curriculum in mathematics develops pupils' ability to reason and solve mathematical problems.
- Improve pupils' personal development and behaviour by:
 - ensuring that pupils develop the skills and attributes necessary to be a successful learner
 - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour in class
 - raising attendance rates so that more pupils attend school more regularly.
- Improve the quality of leadership, teaching, learning and assessment, and curriculum in early years foundation stage by ensuring that:
 - children in Reception class follow the early years curriculum to which they are entitled
 - assessment systems in the Nursery and Reception classes provide consistent, accurate and reliable information on children's learning and development

- teaching uses information to plan tasks that build on children’s early developmental needs, including their knowledge and use of phonics.

A review of the use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken to see how this aspect of the school’s work can improve.

A review of governance should be undertaken to see how this aspect of leadership and management should be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Over time, leadership and management at St Anthony's has been dysfunctional. Chaotic and constant changes to leadership, governance and staff have complicated any effort to secure improvements. Performance has declined since the last section 5 inspection and the school continues to fail to provide an acceptable standard of education for its pupils.
- Almost all of the weaknesses of the school at the time of this inspection were also weaknesses at the time of the last full inspection. Some aspects have become even worse; levels of attendance have fallen further, pupils' behaviour has deteriorated, the quality of early years provision has declined and outcomes in the Year 1 phonics check have fallen to well below average. Those responsible for running and overseeing the school have not been successful in preventing the failings. Planned actions to halt any decline have been too slow to take hold and have proved ineffective.
- A clear strategy to tackle the underachievement of key groups, identified as lacking in the Ofsted December 2016 monitoring report, has not emerged. Too many strategies have been implemented without proper planning, oversight or rigorous review. For example, the current leaders are unable to account for the impact of the £13,200 pupil premium funding received for disadvantaged pupils last year. By September 2017, all this funding had been spent but leaders and governors were unclear what difference it was making to pupils' achievement.
- School finances have not been managed effectively. During the academic year 2016/17, almost £150,000, nearly 50% of the school's overall budget, was spent on external leadership consultancy support. Spending went unchecked and unchallenged by governors. Consequently, there has been insufficient resource to support teaching, the training of staff and to ensure compliance with routine matters of health and safety.
- By September 2017, the new headteacher was so concerned about the state of the school finances, a request was made to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for emergency funding. An audit conducted in November by the ESFA confirmed that the trust was not fully compliant with the Department for Education's Academies financial handbook, particularly around the management of risk and internal financial control.
- Over time, senior leaders have not provided support and challenge for middle leaders to ensure that they have been able to conduct their roles effectively. Until very recently, middle leaders have not had time to monitor their areas of responsibility and tackle the significant weaknesses in the school.
- Leaders' monitoring, to identify how teaching, pupils' learning and the curriculum need to improve, has been ineffective. For example, leaders failed to identify the underperformance of pupils as they move through key stage 1. Monitoring has not placed a sharp enough focus on pupils' progress. The findings from monitoring activities have not been used to plan training and bring about rapid improvement.
- Curriculum design is often ad hoc and piecemeal resulting in patchy implementation

and limited impact in improving pupils' achievement. Topics such as 'The Wonder of the World' lack any coherent overarching planning for progression. Activities jump between subjects or themes and fail to build pupils' knowledge, skill or understanding.

- Planning to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their understanding of British values is weak. Opportunities are designed through assemblies and performances but leaders' focus on functional literacy and numeracy has overlooked these wider, important areas.
- The school's approach to the use of assessment is not successful. Staff have not received adequate training on how to use the assessment system and data inserted cannot be relied on as accurate. The information provided is not used to help pupils to improve their learning.
- The current headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's failings and what is required to bring about the urgent improvements necessary. Action plans prioritise the right areas to be tackled in a determined fashion. Self-evaluation is honest. Poor performance is now being addressed systematically.
- It is recommended that the school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- Governance at St Anthony's is ineffective.
 - Over time, governors have failed to hold senior leaders to account for the school's performance. Questions about how weaknesses are being resolved and teaching improved have not been followed through. Governors have been too accepting of leaders' assurances. For example, in September 2017 governors were 'shocked' to find that statutory safeguarding procedures had not been met. They believed that all issues were resolved.
 - Until very recently, governors did not hold a clear oversight of the school's finances. The use of additional funding has not been scrutinised. Income and expenditure has gone unchecked, leaving the school with too few resources to provide adequately for a quality of education that pupils deserve.
 - Overall, governors acknowledge that not enough support or action took place directly after the last section 5 inspection. They realise that many weaknesses still remain and that, in some areas, the quality of education has got worse.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Over time, a poor culture of safeguarding at the school has existed. Those with responsibility for overseeing arrangements have not ensured that pupils and staff are comprehensively safeguarded. For example, a fire risk assessment conducted in February 2017 indicated that the school building posed a 'significant risk of harm to life'. Matters to urgently tackle the underlying issues were not completed until November 2017, nine months later.
- Site risk assessments have only recently been put in place. They identify work needed

on the fabric of the school building to address falling rendering. Gaps in the single central record, the document that identifies if staff are suitable to work with children, are still being rectified. A lack of training has meant that staff have been unclear on the 'early help' requirements to provide timely intervention and support for those pupils who require it. A recent local authority audit of safeguarding in November 2017 shows that the registration of children in Nursery who start and leave throughout the day was not being undertaken.

- The current headteacher is working hard to improve safeguarding at the school. A root and branch overhaul of the school's procedures and record-keeping has been conducted. Staff no longer use mobile phones in classes or social media for communicating with parents. Processes for child protection, staff training and links with external agencies are now secure. The personal and academic needs of those pupils who have required additional support this term are well and thoroughly documented.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Weak leadership and governance at the school have hampered its ability to bring about the required rapid improvements to teaching. Systems to make improvements, which were lacking at the time of the last inspection, are only in their infancy now, over two years later. The current headteacher reports to have been 'firefighting' so many failings this term, she has been unable to influence the quality of teaching.
- Across the school, too few pupils receive the quality of teaching they need to achieve the standards of which they are capable. At the time of the last full inspection, the school was found to have low expectations of pupils and this remains the case.
- Such low expectations are evident in the ways lessons start and transition times are organised. Time is frequently lost as learning starts too slowly. Pupils moving between tasks take too long to settle because expectations are not made clear to them. Low levels of performance and effort in work have become the norm for many.
- Teachers' subject knowledge and use of assessment are weak. Consequently, too much teaching does not build effectively on what pupils already know, understand and can do. Pupils report that work is often either too easy, or too hard. This leads to a deterioration in their behaviour and disruption to learning.
- Weak subject knowledge in meeting the requirements of the national curriculum for mathematics is resulting in poorly planned schemes of work. Pupils' ability to reason and solve mathematical problems and puzzles is therefore limited.
- Poor writing skills and presentation are a barrier to many pupils, especially for boys. Despite this, there has been no whole-school approach to improving this area of work. The use of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils in developing their writing is poorly organised and has little impact.
- The teaching of phonics is not equipping pupils with the skills they need to recognise sounds and obtain a secure knowledge of the alphabetic code. Pupils' responses to what they read betray a weak understanding of language features and the effects of punctuation. This hinders their progress when reading. Pupils' lack of ability to use their phonic knowledge also hampers their progress when writing.
- Assessment information provided by adults is not accurate or reliable. Pupils' responses

to tasks or questioning are not used routinely to gauge pupils' understanding, check gaps in learning or move pupils on more quickly.

- A new approach to the teaching of reading was introduced in December 2016. However, the high-quality, challenging texts that provide a good model on which to base writing were not used effectively because training to use the resources was not provided. When reading aloud, younger pupils lack expression and confidence, despite receiving positive feedback from adults. The headteacher has effective plans in place that show the potential to improve pupils' reading.
- Current pupils in Years 5 and 6 are making up some lost ground. Activities are better matched to their learning needs and stimulate a better level of discussion and dialogue. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes reflect this better environment for learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Support for pupils' personal development is poorly planned and ineffective. For example, pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain is fragile because the programme to develop pupils' personal, social and emotional development is not delivered effectively. Many pupils are unclear about aspects of safety, life beyond their school or what it means to say you are safe.
- A number of pupils, especially many boys in Years 3 and 4, do not take enough responsibility for their actions and behaviour. Too many lack a clear understanding of the impact of their actions on other pupils' learning. Pride in their work is lacking and presentation is poor.
- Many pupils have not experienced an appropriate curriculum during their time in the early years. The fundamental building blocks for appropriate social and emotional behaviour when interacting with adults and peers are therefore not firmly established. Consequently, many older pupils now demonstrate immature attitudes and find it difficult to regulate their own behaviour.
- Too many pupils do not have a firm grasp of what it takes to be a successful learner. During activities, when support from adults is removed, their learning falters. Over time, pupils become reliant on adult support to help complete even simple tasks.
- The poorly planned and delivered curriculum is not successful in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, nor their understanding of fundamental British values.
- Pupils' responses to tasks or questioning are not used routinely to gauge pupils' understanding, check gaps in learning or move pupils on more quickly.
- Many parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, do not have faith in the school's ability to resolve bullying and behaviour issues successfully. Pupils report that this has only recently changed and that issues are now being resolved promptly. Older pupils enjoy the leadership roles made available for them this term.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Pupils' behaviour has declined since the time of the last full inspection. Now, the behaviour of some pupils too frequently disrupts the learning of others. Often, pupils do not pay enough attention to adults' instructions in class. They talk over teachers or disturb the flow of lessons. Expectations of pupils' behaviour have been too low.
- Pupils report that over time this poor behaviour in lessons has become normal. Some older pupils are concerned that some staff are too happy to accept mediocrity. The disruption to learning experienced during key stage 2 is resulting in weak progress for too many pupils.
- Weak subject knowledge by teachers means that activities planned often do not meet the learning needs of pupils. In such cases, pupils' attitudes to learning deteriorate. Pupils often work on tasks that do not move their learning on. As a result, their concentration wanes and their behaviour deteriorates.
- Pupils move around the school site in a sensible manner. Most conduct themselves appropriately. At playtimes, limitations on the equipment or apparatus available mean some do not routinely play together well. At other times, boys can run in a pack, without giving due regard to other pupils.
- Pupils' attendance at school continues to remain a concern. Overall absence is higher than the national average, especially for the growing number of pupils for whom English is an additional language. A more proactive approach taken this term is beginning to have an impact in a few individual cases. However, a more joined-up and rigorous approach has been lacking.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Weaknesses in pupils' outcomes have persisted across a wide range of subjects for too long. Efforts to tackle significant underachievement have not been successful. Current pupils are also underachieving. Too many pupils are not reaching standards of which they are capable. Not enough is expected of them.
- In many areas, outcomes are not improving or are declining further. For example, in 2016, pupils' attainment at key stage 1 was well below average in reading and mathematics, especially for boys. In 2017, standards at key stage 1 dropped even further and were in the lowest 10% for all subjects.
- Outcomes in pupils' phonic knowledge, skill and understanding have also declined. In 2016, 60% of pupils passed the Year 1 phonic assessment check. By 2017, this had declined to 44%, well below average. When reading, pupils lack confidence in expression and decoding letters and the sounds they make.
- Work in pupils' books shows their fragility in phonic knowledge. Pupils are unable to draw on a depth of knowledge to help them write well. Common errors persist in pupils' attempts when writing the different sounds in words in order to spell them successfully. For older pupils, spelling, punctuation and grammar errors also persist

and are not tackled, limiting their ability to construct technically accurate pieces of writing.

- The increasing number of pupils for whom English is an additional language are not catered for well. Inappropriate assessment systems that fail to check their language acquisition accurately, as well as limited resources to help these pupils access their learning, slow their progress.
- Until a few weeks ago, the school had no provision to support pupils' development of the computing skills needed in the world today. Pupils therefore have a limited understanding of generic keyboard skills or digital literacy strategies, such as how to establish what a reliable source is when working online.
- Pupils who need to catch up on lost ground are also poorly served. This often includes disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Over time, teaching has not met their needs well enough. Their progress stalls and targets set to help them catch up have not redressed earlier failings.
- Teaching and the curriculum are not equipping the most able pupils with the ability to concentrate, engage with learning and apply what they have been taught in a range of subjects. These pupils do not routinely demonstrate the confidence and resilience needed to respond to harder challenges set.
- The failings of the curriculum design over time are typified in pupils' lack of basic knowledge in geography. Older pupils have an insecure grasp of maps and localities. Their limited vocabulary means, for example, they find it difficult when discussing localities that differ from their own.
- The poorly implemented history programme results in pupils' lack of understanding in how Britain has influenced the world, a key part of the history curriculum content. Pupils' work and discussion with them reveal their fragile knowledge of history and illustrate the fundamental failings of the curriculum in preparing pupils for their next phase of education.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are catching up with some lost ground. However, this is not enough to counteract previous failings.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- The quality of education provided for children in the early years has declined and is inadequate. Leadership of the early years is ineffective. Leaders have not ensured that children of Reception age are receiving their entitlement to the early years foundation stage curriculum. Consequently, children are not establishing the building blocks needed for successful learning later in their school life.
- Ongoing building work at the school is restricting children's exposure to outdoor learning, especially for those in Reception. Therefore, activities to reinforce taught aspects or develop children's personal, social and emotional skills through outdoor play have been limited.
- Adults' insecure knowledge of assessment results in inaccurate information being used to plan for children's development. Different assessment systems are used for Nursery and Reception age children. This obstructs the smooth transfer of information.

Information from the school's chosen approach to recording children's learning through observations is not used to adapt the curriculum for children or improve teaching.

- Published data indicates that the proportion of children reaching the expected standard by the end of Reception was in line with the national average. However, the headteacher is clear that the assessment information cannot be relied upon as being accurate.
- Adults in the Nursery do not actively promote and develop children's early language and communication skills. At times, interactions between adults and children can be stifled and do not flow naturally so that children's responses to questions develop appropriately.
- Where adults model spoken English, such as when retelling stories, and when their actions are more considered and thought through, children's language and interest improves. In such instances, children are encouraged to say sounds out loud and to emulate adults when responding to what they hear, so that their spoken language improves.
- Over time, leaders have not made sure that arrangements for safeguarding children comply with agreed policies and procedures. Until very recently, risk assessments required for safe use of the premises had not been completed. Registers to record absences and part-time attendance have only just started.

School details

Unique reference number	140202
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10033094

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	94
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Nick Hyde
Headteacher	Lorna Middleton
Telephone number	01594 823558
Website	www.stanthonysschoolcinderford.co.uk/website/home/226800
Email address	admin@stanthonys.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 May 2015

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about: the school's most recent Ofsted reports, key stage 2 progress measures, information about the phonics scheme being used, an evaluation of the pupil premium strategy, how physical education developments will be sustained, an up-to-date safeguarding policy that is compliant with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016, the school's funding agreement.
- St Anthony's became an academy free school on 2 September 2013. When it received its last full inspection by Ofsted, in May 2015, it was deemed to require special measures.
- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Children in the early years are taught

part time in a Nursery class and full time in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class.

- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is average.
- The proportion of pupils who are in receipt of special educational needs support or have an education, health and care plan is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language has increased and is now average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all classes, looked at pupils' books and at evidence of their achievements over time.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject and middle leaders, and two governors. A telephone call was held with the chair of the governing body.
- The inspector talked with a number of pupils during visits to classes to discuss their work and met with a group of Year 5 and 6 pupils to gather their views on the school.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation including evidence of leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness, information on pupils' attainment and progress, the school's plans for improvement and records relating to safeguarding arrangements.
- The views of parents were considered through analysing 24 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 10 free-text comments.

Inspection team

Richard Light, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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