

# St James Church of England Junior School

Upton Street, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL1 4JU

## Inspection dates

24–25 January 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires Improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes in reading and writing are not good enough. Until recently, pupils have not made good progress in mathematics.
- Leaders have not taken effective action to ensure that pupils achieve well by the time they leave Year 6. It has taken too long to respond to pupils' underachievement.
- Leaders' expectations for staff and pupils are not high enough. As a result, pupils do not make consistently strong progress in a wide range of subjects, including writing.
- Monitoring of the impact of teaching, learning and assessment is not sufficiently developed. This includes checks on the progress of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Disadvantaged pupils make variable progress but it is not consistently strong.
- Leaders are not doing enough to provide support for those pupils who need to catch up quickly in reading, including pupils who have SEN.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of pupils' writing, especially their handwriting and punctuation skills. As a result, the overall quality of pupils' writing suffers.
- Pupils require greater opportunities to practise their writing skills across the curriculum.
- Where there is effective teaching, pupils make good progress. However, good practice is not routinely shared across the school.
- Despite the school's actions to improve attendance, too many pupils are persistently absent.

### The school has the following strengths

- Relationships between leaders, staff and pupils are positive. Leaders have created a culture of respect and tolerance. As a result, pupils are encouraged and guided to be responsible citizens.
- Pupils' welfare is a high priority. Actions to support vulnerable pupils' well-being are strong. Pupils are safer as a result.
- Teachers are providing activities that help many older pupils to develop higher-level reading skills. As a result, most pupils in years 5 and 6 are deepening their understanding of how to explore texts and become curious readers.
- As a result of leaders' effective actions, current pupils' progress is improving in mathematics. This includes the most able pupils.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - there is a relentless focus to reduce levels of persistent absence
  - teaching is consistently strong across the school
  - monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment is effective in driving school improvement
  - checks on the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities lead to a higher proportion making good progress, especially in reading and writing
  - pupils who need to catch up quickly in reading receive the frequent support they need to make rapid progress
  - teachers are held to account for the quality of pupils' writing across the curriculum.
- Strengthen the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that all teachers:
  - provide activities closely matched to the needs of pupils, particularly disadvantaged and those who have SEN in their class
  - have the highest expectations of pupils' writing in all subjects
  - provide effective support for pupils who need to catch up quickly in reading.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders' expectations of what staff and pupils can achieve have not been aspirational in terms of academic outcomes. As a result, pupils' progress in the reading, writing and mathematics has not been good enough over time.
- Leaders' actions have not been sharp enough to ensure rapid improvements to teaching, learning and assessment. For example, leaders have not responded quickly enough to declining standards in pupils' writing. Leaders and governors are determined to 'get it right'. The recently appointed deputy headteacher is working well with the headteacher to drive improvements, based on a more accurate understanding of the school's performance.
- The monitoring of progress made by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not helping pupils to achieve as well as they can. This is particularly noticeable where pupils are not receiving effective support to develop their basic reading skills.
- Inconsistencies exist in teaching across the school. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of their pupils. Where teaching is effective, leaders are not doing enough to ensure that strong practice is shared.
- Leaders have improved systems to assure themselves that teachers' assessment information is uniformly accurate. This supports teachers to plan work based on what pupils know, can do and understand. However, it is not yet having enough impact on pupils' progress.
- The headteacher demonstrates the capacity to lead improvement. She has sought external advice and been effectively supported by the local authority. As a result, a more committed and cohesive middle-leadership team is in place to drive initiatives and raise standards for pupils.
- Staff training has been particularly successful in mathematics. Leaders have secured improvements in mathematics from a low starting point. As a result, current pupils' learning and progress in mathematics is stronger than other subjects.
- Leaders have cultivated a caring school community where pupils' well-being is a high priority. Relationships between leaders, staff and pupils are strong. Pupils are guided to be caring, responsible citizens.
- The school's approach to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is effective. The school prepares pupils positively for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about other cultures and celebrate diversity.
- Older pupils have a clear understanding of fundamental British values. They can articulate examples of the rule of law, democracy, equality and tolerance. Pupils can express how these values have a positive impact on their lives.

### Governance of the school

- Governors have not been sufficiently rigorous in ensuring that senior leaders tackle key weaknesses. Consequently, their challenge to leaders has not brought about the

improvement for pupils that has been needed. For example, a previous monitoring visit by Ofsted highlighted the need for pupils to successfully transfer English writing skills to other curriculum subjects. This is not yet evident in pupils' work.

- Governors monitor the impact of the pupil premium grant. However, they hold an overly optimistic view of the performance of disadvantaged pupils. Too many disadvantaged pupils do not make good progress from their starting points.
- Governors' use of the additional PE and sports funding is effective. Pupils enjoy a wide variety of sporting activities and extra-curricular clubs to maintain healthy lifestyles and participation in sport.
- Governors are enthusiastic and willing to contribute. They are an appreciated and visible body in the school. Staff recognise that governors are increasingly proactive in challenging and supporting them. Governors have been involved in the more recent improvements in mathematics.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have created a culture where safeguarding is seen as everyone's responsibility.
- Staff protect pupils against a wide range of possible risks. They receive training to raise awareness of vulnerable pupils. Staff know how to keep pupils safe from radicalisation and extremist views.
- Administrators carry out checks on the suitability of staff, volunteers and visitors to the school. Pupils are safer as a result of these processes.
- Pupils can clearly explain how the school supports them to stay safe online.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Pupils do not receive sufficient support to catch up quickly in developing their basic reading skills. This includes pupils who have SEN. The school identifies these pupils through assessment but teaching does not ensure the rapid improvement needed.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in writing are not high enough, particularly for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5. Pupils do not consistently apply the punctuation and handwriting skills expected for their age group. Pupils are unclear about how to improve their writing.
- Teachers' planning does not ensure that pupils have the opportunity to practise writing sufficiently in subjects other than English. Consequently, this limits the speed at which pupils can make progress with their writing skills.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently improving pupils' progress. Improvements made to assess pupils' ability levels are not being used consistently to build on what pupils already know, can do and understand. As a result, progress is not as strong as it should be. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN.
- Some Year 3 and Year 4 pupils do not focus well on their learning because teachers fail to reinforce expectations for conduct and set clear tasks that challenge pupils. Where

teachers' expectations are higher, pupils' progress in gaining key skills is stronger.

- Teachers' planning is ensuring a good match of work for the majority of current pupils in reading and mathematics. Consequently, most current pupils are making good progress in these subjects.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported by teachers and teaching assistants who help them to engage in learning. However, their progress is not as strong as it needs to be in key areas such as reading.
- Older pupils, including the most able, work successfully on more sophisticated reading skills such as inference and deduction. This is because teachers use skilful questioning and choose texts that will inspire pupils to learn. These higher-order reading skills are being taught well to Year 5 and 6 pupils. As a result, most pupils in these classes make good progress and develop skills they can apply across the curriculum.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved so that pupils are required to think and reason mathematically for themselves. Pupils are used to applying their understanding of mathematics to solve problems, which they do successfully. As a result, current pupils are typically making good progress. This includes the most able pupils. Pupils from all year groups say they enjoy learning in mathematics and feel the level of challenge is greater than in other subjects.
- The high proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported. On entry, these pupils are assessed in order to determine to what extent their grasp of the English language is a barrier to learning. Many pupils talk enthusiastically about how the school has helped them to adapt to a new language.
- Systems to monitor pupils' progress and check if they are learning at an age-appropriate level are improving. However, they are not sufficiently developed to ensure that teachers' planning matches the needs of different pupils, particularly those who need to catch up quickly.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils' welfare is a priority for staff. Parents and carers are encouraged to engage with the school and as a result, staff are well informed about their pupils' wider welfare concerns.
- Pupils are safe and feel safe. They feel sure that the adults in the school will deal with their concerns. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online. They say bullying is dealt with quickly if it occurs.
- Pupils are mostly confident and self-assured. They show respect for others' ideas and views. Older pupils can discuss their experience of school and reflect upon the positive impact it has upon their lives. The prefect system provides pupils with responsibilities, which they rise to and value. Pupils are proud of their school's 'family feel'.
- The school is a caring, nurturing, environment where relationships are strong. Pupils actively show care and support for each other. They interact well during break and

lunchtimes. Pupils readily engage in physical activity and they know how to keep themselves healthy.

- The school is an orderly learning environment. Although the site is restricted for outdoor space, the curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils' personal development. For example, forest school and access to the nearby 'City Farm' provide wider opportunities to deepen pupils' understanding of the wider world.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their general conduct throughout the day is positive.
- Staff are skilled at supporting pupils, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities, to make appropriate choices and maintain self-discipline. Pupils learn about the qualities of being a responsible citizen through the school's strong spiritual ethos.
- Most pupils are keen to improve their work. Attitudes to learning are typically positive.
- The school is proactive in seeking to reduce levels of persistent absence. With the support of the local authority, and close links with another local school, initiatives exist to work with families and maximise pupils' attendance.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Progress in reading and mathematics was in the bottom 20% of schools nationally for the past two years. Progress improved in 2017 but remained below figures found nationally.
- Current pupils do not make consistently strong progress in a wide range of subjects, including writing. Pupils' attainment in writing at the end of Year 6 declined from 2016 to 2017. It is below the national average figure for writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils make some progress. However, it is not routinely strong progress due to the lack of a robust, strategic approach by governors, leaders and teachers.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, do not make enough progress in reading and writing. This is due to leaders and teachers not systematically checking the impact of support for these pupils.
- Pupils' attainment in reading by the end of year 6 has not improved quickly enough. Current pupils are making better progress in higher-order reading skills. However, younger pupils, some of whom need to catch up quickly with basic reading skills, are not being supported well enough to do so.
- Current pupils' progress in writing is not as strong as it should be. Teachers' expectations are not high enough, including expectations for pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have SEN.
- Current pupils typically make better progress in mathematics than in English. This includes the most able pupils. The introduction of greater opportunities for pupils to reason mathematically and use their skills to solve problems is having a positive impact across the school.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the combined expected standard at the end of key

stage 2, in reading, writing and mathematics declined from 2016 to 2017. As a result, too many pupils are not prepared for the next phase of their education at secondary school.

## School details

Unique reference number	115606
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10033140

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robin Bown
Headteacher	Angela Anderton
Telephone number	01452 520 714
Website	<a href="http://www.st-james-jun.gloucs.sch.uk/">www.st-james-jun.gloucs.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@st-james-jun.gloucs.sch.uk">admin@st-james-jun.gloucs.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	7–8 July 2015

## Information about this school

- St James Church of England Junior School is smaller than the average-sized junior school. There are seven classes.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance in 2015, 2016 and 2017.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is higher than the national

average.

- The school meets requirements on the use of the sport premium.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning across the school. Some of these visits were made jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspection team looked carefully at pupils' work from all year groups and across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors talked with pupils from different year groups about how they feel about school, how teachers help them with their learning and how the school keeps them safe.
- The inspection team held discussions with school leaders, staff and members of the governing body. The inspectors also took into account responses to questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.
- The inspection team looked at the school's evaluation of its own performance, its improvement plan, school policies and the minutes of meetings of the governing body. Inspectors also considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- The inspectors listened to a selection of pupils read.
- The inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including a free-text response. Inspectors also took account of the school's own parental questionnaire.
- The inspectors talked with a number of parents during the inspection.

## Inspection team

Mike Brady, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Nick Sheppard

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. [www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

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