

Kintbury St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Gainsborough Avenue, Kintbury, Hungerford, RG17 9XN

Inspection dates 19–20 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Progress in mathematics is not consistently good due to a lack of challenge for pupils of all abilities in some lessons.
- Pupils do not always know how to improve their work and have too little information about how to succeed in lessons so that their hard work does not result in better achievement.
- Teachers do not consistently make enough use of the wealth of information they gather about pupils' achievements when planning their lessons.
- In a number of lessons, teachers are slow to make changes to tasks that pupils find too easy or too difficult.
- Pupils are occasionally bored and restless in lessons, so that they do not consistently demonstrate good attitudes to learning.
- Targets set by school leaders and the quality of feedback given to teachers to improve their performance are not sufficiently aspirational and clear to ensure that pupils excel.
- Checks that school leaders make to gauge the school's success do not always take sufficient account of pupils' achievement. This slows school improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures children do well and enjoy their learning.
- Almost all pupils make progress in line with national expectations in English.
- The achievement of higher attaining pupils is improving in both English and mathematics.
- Teachers' positive and encouraging attitudes create a positive climate for learning in most lessons.
- Pupils behave well and try hard when they are interested in the work and fully engaged in learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons, of which 11 were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils, two governors, and school staff including senior leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the 24 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection.
- They observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records related to behaviour and attendance and safeguarding records.

Inspection team

Liz Kounnou, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Ken Bryan

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Far fewer pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium than average.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported through school action is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs supported through school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is higher than average. More than a third of this group has very specific special educational needs. These include profound and multiple learning difficulties; behavioural, emotional and social difficulties; physical disabilities; and autistic spectrum disorder.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase good and better teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2, especially in mathematics, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of all pupils so that the pace of learning increases and is sustained in all year groups
 - consistently providing pupils with clear information about how to improve their work and how to succeed in lessons
 - ensuring that teachers reshape activities within lessons in response to their observations of pupils' learning, so that progress improves.
- Speed up pupils' progress as pupils move through the school, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - checking pupils' current level of understanding and using this information to plan lessons which ensure that all pupils confidently achieve the next steps in learning
 - ensuring that teachers foster pupils' understanding and develop pupils' ability to think and reason for themselves
 - setting aspirational learning targets for pupils of all abilities and ensuring that pupils know precisely how to reach these.
- Improve school systems for checking how well the school is doing, ensuring that leaders:
 - take account of the impact their actions have on raising pupils' achievements across the school when they judge the success of new initiatives
 - achieve greater consistency in the quality of teaching across different subjects and year groups as a result of clear feedback for teachers that explains precisely how they need to change their teaching in order to accelerate pupils' progress
 - make use of aspirational targets for learning that accurately reflect pupils' prior attainment when they assess the performance of teaching staff.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The small number of pupils in each cohort makes it difficult to make meaningful comparisons with national data, as one child can represent a high percentage in each data set. Nonetheless, most children start school with levels of attainment typical for their age. By the time they leave the school, standards remain broadly average. Pupils' progress varies as pupils move through the school.
- Children get off to a good start. When they leave the Reception class far more children reach or exceed expected levels of attainment for their age than the national average.
- Progress slows when pupils move through Key Stages 1 and 2, particularly in mathematics, because work becomes less demanding, and there are fewer occasions for pupils to make their own decisions and think for themselves. Few pupils make better than expected progress. This is mainly because targets set for learning lack aspiration so that pupils are not encouraged to excel.
- In addition, progress is at times slower than expected in mathematics because pupils have too few opportunities to extend their learning and spend too long repeating work that they already know how to complete.
- In contrast, in English, the great majority of pupils make progress in line with national expectations. Good progress in learning the way sounds and letters are linked, results from small group activities precisely matched to abilities. This is built on as pupils move through school so that pupils make expected progress in reading. Pupils contribute to lessons, regularly talking to one another about work, so that communication skills are developing appropriately.
- Pupils' achievement in writing has improved, and compares favourably with national outcomes. Subjects that are topic based strongly motivate pupils to write and capture their interest well. For example, in a Year 6 lesson pupils practised their writing skills by eagerly adapting their first ideas to hook the reader in the opening sentences of their short stories.
- Since the last inspection, there has been an improvement in the achievement of higher attaining pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, in English and mathematics. However, this is not yet consistent across the school.
- Good pastoral care and a high level of support in lessons for pupils who are disabled or have very specific special educational needs ensure they make progress in line with their peers, so that they reach the levels expected given their starting points. Very few exceed this level of achievement.
- Individualised support for pupils for whom the school is in receipt of pupil premium enables them to keep pace with all other groups of pupils in the school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is demanding and motivating for children of all abilities. Children are delighted with many of the activities, such as making spiders from pipe cleaners. They respond very well to adults' questions, which make children think hard about their answers.
- Children settle into school very well because adults make good use of praise to encourage them. As a result, children are rapidly developing very positive attitudes to learning and are keen to listen to what adults say. They have plenty of opportunities to contribute and work together on their own ideas.
- Staff keep meticulous records of children's achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage in well-presented journals. Adults make good use of this information to promote learning throughout the year.
- The pace of learning slows in Key Stages 1 and 2, particularly in mathematics, because the detailed information gathered about pupils' progress is not consistently used to set aspirational targets for learning. Teachers' expectations in Key Stages 1 and 2 are not always as high as those seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and this acts to slow pupils' progress.

- Lessons sometimes lack sufficient challenge because teachers spend too long going over work that pupils have already mastered. On other occasions, the work set is too difficult for pupils to tackle on their own so that they lose interest. Teachers do not always reshape activities during lessons in response to how pupils are coping with the learning activities.
- Teachers have responded enthusiastically to training designed to improve the use of 'assessment for learning'. They regularly display learning intentions for pupils and simple statements about how pupils could succeed in lessons. However, these are not consistently set out in language that all pupils can understand, and do not always provide pupils with a clear idea of precisely what they will learn today, or how they will be able to judge their own success in each lesson.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but do not always provide clear guidance on why pupils have done well, and how they could improve their work even further. Marking comments contain few references to the general targets displayed in classrooms.
- There is a very high number of teaching assistants in the school, 14 for seven classes. They support the group of pupils who are disabled or have specific special educational needs appropriately so that they can take a full part in all lessons. Just occasionally teaching assistants are not deployed to best effect.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Pupils usually behave well all around the school. They are polite and support one another well in most lessons, but there is some variation in pupils' responses in different classes. Occasionally, in a small number of lessons pupils become restless and fidgety and talk to one another when they should be listening.
- Most pupils work hard and try their best. They work well together and show good attitudes to learning when lessons capture their interest and enthusiasm. However, their efforts do not consistently lead to good progress because work they are asked to complete does not always allow them to excel. They relish the opportunities, when provided, to take responsibility for their own work.
- Teachers encourage pupils to try hard through their positive comments and attitudes. The majority of teachers manage behaviour well in lessons and this creates a positive climate for learning. As a result, the great majority of pupils feel comfortable, safe and happy at school.
- Pupils, parents and carers report that bullying in all its forms is rare, and pupils say that teachers deal with any incidents quickly and effectively. Pupils have a very strong sense of how to keep themselves safe from all forms of bullying.
- Pupils with particular behavioural needs are making suitable progress in managing their behaviour due to good pastoral support from teachers and teaching assistants. The school has worked well in partnership with outside agencies to increase staff skills in this area.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- School leaders are committed to moving the school forward and have brought improvements in writing, developing writing across the curriculum and increasing the achievement of a number of higher attaining pupils in school. The school's self-evaluation recognises that there is still work to be done to move the school to the next level.
- Robust meetings between senior leaders and teachers to discuss pupils' progress are thoroughly prepared and provide a lot of detail about individual pupils and the varied groups in their classes. This diligent approach extends to the checks that senior leaders make to monitor how well the school is doing. Leaders promote equality by keeping a very close eye on the achievement of all groups of pupils through extensive analysis of information so that timely support can be given. Discrimination is not tolerated.
- Nonetheless, leaders are not yet securing rapid enough improvements in the quality of teaching or pupils' achievement to make this a good school. This is mainly because targets set for pupils' achievement, and for which teachers are responsible, lack the necessary level of challenge to ensure good or better progress. In addition, some actions noted on the strategic

plan are marked successful when completed, regardless of the impact on raising standards.

- Appropriate procedures are in place for monitoring teaching and for performance management. Lesson observations are regular but feedback to teachers does not always explain clearly and precisely what is needed to make teaching good or better.
- Regular professional development opportunities are provided that align with both the needs of the school and the individual needs of the teachers.
- Pupils enjoy their subjects, which are suitably designed to match their interests, but at times lack the necessary rigour to promote consistently high standards. Suitable attention is given to promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, in particular through the visits that occur during the school year. Wide-ranging opportunities to develop literacy skills in lessons across the curriculum are having a good impact, particularly in raising standards of writing.
- The local authority supports the school through the 'systematic school improvement programme' and uses the school's format for 'pupil progress meetings' as a model of good practice.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- members of the governing body are diligent in ensuring staff and pupils are safe at school; statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are met
- governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school because they require senior leaders to provide detailed information, and regularly seek clarification; school improvement has a high priority at each meeting of the governing body
- rigorous debate at governing body meetings demonstrates its clear ambition to ensure that standards rise further.

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	109967
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	401093

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	162
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Mitchell and Annette Warren
Headteacher	Tina Norton
Date of previous school inspection	March 2010
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