

St Mary's Church of England (VC) Primary School

Southam Road, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX16 2EG

Inspection dates

10–11 October 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		Good	2
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

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress across the school in writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching has not been good enough. This is because not all work in lessons is set at the right level to help pupils make good progress
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to practise their writing in different styles and in other subjects.
- The teaching of basic mathematical skills is too variable and pupils do not have enough opportunities to use these skills to solve mathematical problems.
- Marking, especially in mathematics, does not always tell pupils how to improve their work.
- There is an over reliance on a few members of the governing body to challenge senior leaders about the progress that pupils make.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and other senior leaders have brought stability and drive to the leadership and management of the school. They understand what the school does well and what needs to improve. Changes are being made to move the school forward.
- They have improved the quality of teaching. The amount of good teaching is increasing and this is beginning to help pupils improve their reading, writing and mathematics.
- A rigorous and consistent way to teach basic reading skills has been introduced which is increasing the rate of pupils' progress in reading.
- Pupils enjoy school are keen to learn and behave well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 33 full and part lessons and observed nine teachers. Lessons were also observed in conjunction with the headteacher.
- Samples of pupils' work and the school checking of pupils' progress were analysed.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a group of pupils.
- A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- A number of pupils were heard reading.
- Responses from 19 parents and carers who completed the Parent View Survey on the Ofsted website were received and analysed.

Inspection team

James Henry, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Pervina Saunders

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mary's Church of England Primary school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils come from White British heritage. The number of pupils from different ethnic groups is above the national average, especially those from Pakistani heritage who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for extra funding (the pupil premium) is around 20% and slightly below the national average.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action, school action plus, or with a statement of special education needs, are below the national average.
- The number of pupils who join or leave the school at different times is higher than the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and increase the rate of pupils' progress in mathematics and writing, especially across Key Stage 2, by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write in different styles, especially for non-fictional purposes
 - pupils practising their writing skills in other subjects
 - improving pupils' understanding and use of mathematical language by teaching calculation skills consistently across the school
 - pupils using their skills to solve mathematical problems
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good by:
 - setting work at the right level
 - marking work, especially in mathematics, so that pupils know how to improve
 - allowing more able pupils to take responsibility for their own learning in lessons.
- Strengthen the governing body so that leaders are held to account robustly for the progress that pupils make.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children enter the school with skills and abilities below those expected for their age. The progress they make is not better than expected so standards are below average by the time they leave the school.
- The achievement of pupils requires improvement because their progress is too variable, especially in writing and mathematics. This is the case for all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium also make variable progress in writing and mathematics and the gap between their achievement and all pupils nationally is not closing quickly enough.
- A few pupils have made inadequate progress during Key Stage 2 in mathematics. This is being tackled successfully by more rigorous monitoring and providing extra support where necessary. More needs to be done to help pupils develop their calculation skills and use them to solve problems.
- Pupils make better progress in reading than in writing because there is a clear way of teaching reading that everyone follows.
- Opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in other subjects, especially in writing for non-fictional purposes, are not well enough established.
- Checks on the progress that pupils are making are accurate and show that their writing and mathematics is beginning to improve. In the national test at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2012 more pupils reached the standards expected for their age.
- Classroom observations and pupils' work show they are beginning to make better progress in lessons, especially when work is challenging enough for them. For example, older pupils in a mathematics lesson were working independently and showing good perseverance in learning about prime numbers.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not good enough to enable pupils to make good progress. Most parents who responded to the Ofsted Parent View survey feel that their children are taught well. Pupils also say that they are taught well.
- In a minority of lessons, work is not set at the right level for different groups of pupils, especially the more able who do not develop their investigation skills and learn independently enough.
- Some good teaching and learning was seen when pupils were involved in practical, creative activities. Year 2 pupils were involved in practical art activities based on a theme about pirates and Year 6 pupils explored what makes 'a fair test' by making parachutes from different materials.
- Teachers regularly mark pupils' work. Marking in writing is generally better than in mathematics but comments do not always tell pupils how they can do better. Pupils regularly consider their own understanding at the end of lessons.
- Some teachers question pupils well to check their understanding and make sure they are fully involved. Teachers talk for too long in some lessons which slows the pace of learning and pupils' attention can wander.
- Teachers ensure their classrooms are pleasant, interesting places for pupils to learn in. They successfully develop pupils' self-esteem by stressing the importance of values such as perseverance, cooperation with others and responsibility.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and those who may join the school at different times, so they are fully included in lessons. There are a few

occasions when teaching assistants are over reliant on guidance from the teacher to allow pupils to be more independent in their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is a strength of the school.
- Most parents who completed the Ofsted Parent View survey felt that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved. The large majority feel that the school deals effectively with bullying, although a small minority disagreed. Almost all would recommend this school to other parents.
- Pupils say bullying of any kind is very rare and that behaviour is good around the school and in lessons. They also said that while they did fall out, even with their best friends, they quickly made friends again. Pupils value the support given to them by staff and have confidence in the adults in school to deal with any problems that may arise.
- Pupils from different cultural heritages get on well and are valued equally. Racist incidents are extremely rare because the school effectively monitors and tackles any form of discrimination.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about school and keen to learn. They are polite, cooperate well in lessons and play happily together.
- The school promotes good behaviour effectively and staff manage pupils' behaviour well, including those with emotional and behavioural needs who have joined the school at different times. As a result these pupils settle quickly into their new classes.
- There is very little disruption to learning in lessons and there have been very few exclusions over the past few years.
- Attendance is in line with the national average. Although the school constantly reminds parents of the need to be punctual, there are a few families whose children are consistently late for school.
- Pupils are not always given enough opportunities to take responsibility and manage their own behaviour

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Instability in the school's leadership since the last inspection has meant that the quality of teaching has not been improved enough to be consistently good, so all groups of pupils making no better than broadly expected progress.
- The headteacher, supported by senior leaders and a new chair and vice-chair of the governing body, has raised expectations, especially in improving the quality of teaching.
- Rigorous monitoring by senior leaders linked to managing the performance of teachers has tackled the small pockets of inadequate teaching and is beginning to increase the amount of good teaching in the school.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of what the school does well and what more needs to be done. Plans are in place to raise pupils' achievement and there have been improvements in the outdoor learning for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Improvements in the achievements of older pupils are not well-established.
- Senior leaders have made sure that the checks on the progress that pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics are accurate so that teachers can be held responsible for the achievement of the pupils in their class.
- Individual and groups of pupils, especially those known to be eligible for extra funding, are monitored to identify those who require extra support. Financial resources, including that from the pupil premium, are helping increase the rate at which pupils learn and are closing the gaps in the learning for a small minority of pupils.
- The subjects taught, assemblies, links with the local parish church and a sheltered housing association develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness appropriately. Pupils

are enthusiastic about the after school activities such as the cookery club, the choir and sporting events available to them.

- Safeguarding policies and procedures are effective. All staff have been trained to protect children and checked to ensure they are suitable to work in school.
- The local authority provides good support for the school, which includes arranging temporary senior leadership and helping the headteacher in improving the quality of teaching.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- is over reliant on a few members of the governing body to rigorously challenge senior leaders about the achievement of pupils
 - is too dependent on a small minority of the governors to help move the school forward quickly by understanding its strengths and weaknesses and monitoring its work robustly
 - is supportive and ensures that legal duties, such as safeguarding procedures and managing the performance of the headteacher, are met.
 - includes members who do not fully understand how well the school is doing compared to similar schools and whether teachers' performance, especially in helping pupils make good progress, is clearly linked to increases in salaries.
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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	123094
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	406139

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynne Parsons
Headteacher	Kathryn Crawford
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2011
Telephone number	01295 263026
Fax number	01295 263026
Email address	Office.3022@ocnmail.net

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