

St Mary's Island Church of England (Aided) Primary School

Island Way West, Chatham ME4 3ST

Inspection dates

9–10 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures

- Pupils do not do well enough because there is too much weak teaching.
- Leaders and managers have not done enough to improve teaching.
- Too few pupils do as well as they should in writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- Although pupils know the sounds that letters make, they are not able to use what they know to help them with their spelling.
- Teachers do not set appropriate targets for all pupils, and sometimes the work they plan is too hard or too easy.
- Though they do not behave badly, pupils lose concentration when they are bored by their work.
- Sometimes teachers do not know enough about the subjects they are teaching.
- Other adults who are in the classroom are not always used sufficiently well to support pupils' learning.
- Teachers' marking does not help pupils to improve or correct their work.
- Leaders and managers and the governing body have not done enough to sort out weaknesses since the last inspection, so the school has not improved.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has quickly gained the confidence of staff, parents, carers and pupils.
- She has quickly shown her commitment to helping the school to improve. The newly appointed middle leaders are in agreement about what needs to be done.
- Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together and are considerate towards other people.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons, of which four were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made a number of other short visits to lessons. They also visited acts of collective worship, the before- and after-school clubs and break times.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the chair of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and school staff, including middle leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the 69 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, and they met parents and carers informally around the school. Two parents made personal contact with the lead inspector.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including information on the management of teachers' performance, the local authority's review of the school's work, minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's development planning, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors undertook a detailed scrutiny of a sample of pupils' books, listened to pupils reading and observed the teaching of reading.

Inspection team

Lynn Alexander, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andrew Lyons	Additional Inspector
Janet Watson	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with 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.

Information about this school

- St Mary's Island Church of England (Aided) Primary is larger than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through School Action is broadly average, while the proportion of pupils supported at School Action Plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Most pupils are White British. Others come from a wide variety of backgrounds, including African, Black Caribbean, Indian, Pakistani and other White heritages, but the proportion in each group is very small.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the Pupil Premium (extra money given to schools by the government) is well below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement and progress.
- Since the last inspection, there have been a number of changes to the senior leadership and teaching staff. The current headteacher started working at the school five weeks before the beginning of the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eradicate inadequate teaching and significantly increase the proportion of good or better teaching by ensuring that:
 - teachers' subject knowledge is good and that training is provided for teachers and teaching assistants to keep them up-to-date, particularly in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics
 - teachers plan lessons that are tailored to meet the different needs and abilities of all pupils
 - teachers keep a close check on the progress of all pupils in lessons, ensuring that they deal with any misunderstanding quickly
 - marking and feedback to pupils are accurate, provide clear guidance about how to improve and identify the next steps in pupils' learning
 - time is provided for pupils to correct their work
 - lessons actively engage and interest all pupils
 - teaching assistants are deployed so that they support the learning of all pupils.
- Improve the achievement of all pupils, ensuring that more pupils reach the higher levels in writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1, and that pupils make at least expected progress in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2, by:
 - agreeing a systematic approach to the teaching of reading and writing, including the use of synthetic phonics (letters and sounds) and monitoring its impact on pupils' spelling
 - making sure teachers use the outcomes of assessments to set challenging and achievable targets for all pupils
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills and knowledge

- analysing assessment information to identify high attainers at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure they are fully challenged in Key Stage 1
- ensuring senior leaders regularly check pupils' progress and intervene quickly where needed to provide specific teaching programmes that are appropriate and successful in getting pupils back on track.
- Improve the ability of leaders and the governing body to sustain improvement by ensuring that:
 - provision for pupils, and particularly the quality of teaching, is rigorously monitored and robustly evaluated against the Teachers' Standards and through appraisal and performance management, so that teachers are held to account for pupils' achievement
 - regular and robust analysis of information about pupils' achievement is undertaken to find out how well all groups are making progress, and that plans for improvement are adapted accordingly
 - there is a sharply focused approach to improving teaching and learning through a programme of effective training and the sharing of good practice
 - the newly appointed middle leaders have the knowledge and skills to lead and manage their areas effectively, and are given the responsibility and time to do so
 - improvement plans include clear and specific indicators so that success can be easily measured.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Too few pupils make the progress expected of them as they move through the school. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards are lower in mathematics and particularly in writing, than in reading. Standards in mathematics remain below English at the end of Key Stage 2. The problems are largely in Key Stages 1 and 2 rather than the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are broadly typical for their age. By the time they begin Key Stage 1, most pupils' attainment is in line with what is expected and some do better.
- The school has collected but not sufficiently analysed assessment information, for example to identify the proportion of children who reach above average standards at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, opportunities to build on good progress and provide challenge as pupils move into Key Stage 1 are missed. As a result of weak teaching over time, not enough of the more able pupils achieve the higher levels in writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 who met the expected standard in the national phonics screening check in June 2012 was just below the national average. Pupils recognise the sounds that letters make but weaker readers do not always use this knowledge to help them with their reading and especially their spelling. Weaknesses in spelling continue as pupils move up through the school.
- Pupils' progress varies in pace and is sometimes too slow. As a result, pupils are not learning quickly enough.
- Standards are not high enough and there is no sustained trend of improvement. The rate of improvement is too slow, particularly for girls in mathematics.
- Pupils underachieve in mathematics. This was an area for improvement at the previous inspection which still persists because there is too little good teaching and not enough opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills and knowledge.
- Disabled pupils, and those who have special educational needs, make progress that is broadly as expected overall and a small proportion of them make good progress. This is because the programmes that are provided to support them are tailored to their needs.
- The very small proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the Pupil Premium make progress at a similar rate to other pupils in the school, which is not good enough.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- The quality of teaching, including the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics, is inadequate across the school. Too little teaching is good or better and, as a result, pupils do not make enough progress.
- Sometimes teachers' subject knowledge is lacking, which leads to confusion for pupils. In a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson, all pupils were asked to make a cube but the task was too difficult because they were not given an example and they did not understand their instructions.
- Too often the tasks pupils are given do not match their needs. In a Key Stage 1 writing lesson, all pupils were expected to write sentences about a picture. Some found this easy but one pupil wrote nothing and was given no support. In such cases, pupils lose interest in their learning.
- The best teaching has a positive impact on learning because tasks are based on pupils' starting points and capabilities. In these lessons, teachers set challenging work that enables pupils to make progress. In a mathematics lesson in Key Stage 2, pupils used their multiplication skills to sort numbers to enter on a Venn diagram, with groups working at various levels of difficulty.

- In observations of the teaching of reading, including phonics, inspectors saw some good practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. However, where teaching was weak, the pace of the lesson was too slow and all pupils did the same work.
- Teachers ask questions to find out what pupils know but where teaching is weak, teachers only ask those pupils who volunteer to answer questions; they do not check on the understanding of all the pupils in the class. Pupils are given too long to complete undemanding tasks and teachers miss opportunities to accelerate progress or deal with misconceptions.
- When teachers mark pupils' work they identify what they have done well and give recommendations for improvement. However, in discussions with pupils, inspectors found that they did not always have opportunities to correct their work, especially spellings, and they were not always sure of their next steps in learning.
- When teaching requires improvement, teaching assistants are not deployed to best effect. Opportunities are missed for the assistants to adapt tasks to meet the needs of pupils and support learning, for example in phonics.
- Inspectors saw some effective small group work for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. These sessions, separate from the class, enabled pupils to make progress and be proud of their achievements.
- The large majority of parents who responded to Parent View say their children are taught well. However, this view does not match the findings of the inspection.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons reflects the quality of the teaching. When teaching is less than good, pupils lose interest and occasionally misbehave and adults do not always deal with this effectively.
- Pupils generally behave well in and around the school and have good manners. However, they do not always treat lunchtime staff with the same respect as they do other adults.
- The school provides effective support for the very few pupils who need help to manage their behaviour; there is also specialist training for staff.
- Pupils are aware of bullying and the different forms it takes. They referred in discussion with inspectors to news stories about internet safety. They say that any problems are usually to do with friends falling out, and that adults deal with their concerns well.
- Pupils are welcoming and generally have positive attitudes to each other's differences. As a result, the school is a harmonious community.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and they say they enjoy school and feel safe. They have a sound understanding of how to keep themselves safe and avoid accidents.
- The large majority of parents who responded to Parent View say they think the school makes sure pupils are well behaved, and the majority think staff deal effectively with bullying. Almost all say their children are happy and safe at school and inspectors share this view.

The leadership and management

are inadequate

- Leaders and managers have not successfully attended to the issues that the previous inspection identified as being in need of improvement. Improvement plans for example, are not sharp enough and do not show how the school expects to measure whether or not it has been successful in tackling weaknesses..
- Leaders and managers have not checked the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement regularly or in any depth. Staff performance has not been managed rigorously and the programme of training for staff has not had sufficient impact. Teachers have not had enough opportunities to learn from the good practice of others. Consequently, the quality of teaching has not improved.
- Pupils' progress has not been effectively and regularly checked and targets have not been set

for all pupils. As a result, the achievement of pupils has not improved enough.

- Data on progress have not been analysed to identify any groups of pupils who are underachieving and need extra help. This weakness in the analysis of progress of groups also means that the school cannot be sure it is providing equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- The roles of middle leaders have not been developed. The newly appointed subject and phase leaders share the high expectations of the new headteacher, but they have not yet had the training or time to make an impact on outcomes for pupils.
- These things mean that school has not demonstrated sufficient capacity to improve. Nevertheless, the new headteacher has vision and drive. In the very short time since her appointment, she has rapidly started to make changes based on accurate evaluations. These have been commented on favourably by staff, parents and pupils, but it is too soon for them to have had an impact.
- The curriculum has some positive features, but it is not meeting the needs of all pupils. This is because it does not promote high enough levels of achievement and pupils have gaps in their knowledge and skills, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- The inclusive approach of the school and its strong partnership with the church provides pupils with opportunities for reflection, social interaction and a strong moral code. Pupils from all cultures share their experiences and, as a result, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The school works effectively with other agencies to support its most vulnerable pupils well.
- All statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are met.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- although governors have acted appropriately in providing challenge to senior leaders, governors' impact has been limited by weaknesses in, and changes to, the school's leadership
 - it took the correct strategic action when it commissioned a review of the school from the local authority, in order to get an objective evaluation of the school's position
 - following this, it appointed an interim headteacher, prior to the appointment of the current headteacher, and undertook a restructuring of leadership roles within the school
 - most governors understand the information they receive about pupils' progress and achievement and they have been appropriately involved in decisions about the use of funding, and in particular the Pupil Premium.
- The local authority provided governors with an accurate evaluation of the school, and follow-up support. For example, it has led staff training about improving the quality of teaching and accountability for pupils' progress.

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	132056
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	406464

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	403
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Goad
Headteacher	Christine Easton
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 January 2012
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