

# Totnes St John's Church of England Primary School

Pathfields, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5TZ

**Inspection dates** 14–15 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- Teaching is not always good because pupils are not stretched enough or encouraged to take a full part in lessons.
- Teachers do not expect enough of all pupils, which slows their progress.
- Different subjects are not organised well enough to interest pupils and help them make faster progress.
- Attainment is not high enough; pupils in Years 1 to 6 of all abilities could make better progress.
- The school now checks teaching more thoroughly but there are still gaps in the way leaders are making sure that it is getting better.
- The governing body does not have an in-depth understanding of achievement so cannot probe why progress is not better.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and staff have begun to make improvements. Plans for the future address concerns well.
- Writing standards have improved. Well-targeted spending of additional funds means that there is little difference in the rates of progress of different groups.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage provides children with a good start to their education.
- Pupils behave well. Bullying is uncommon and well dealt with. Staff pay close attention to pupils' care and the school is a safe place.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's website and a range of documents, including its policies and assessment records.
- Inspectors observed 13 lessons taught by nine teachers over almost seven hours. Meetings were held with staff, pupils and members of the governing body and an inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 30 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

## Inspection team

John Carnaghan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sandra Woodman

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is below average in size when compared with all primary schools. The proportions of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and eligible for pupil premium support (additional money allocated to schools by the government for specific groups) are above average.
- Almost all pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported on school action is average. The proportion supported on action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school has a higher than average turnover of pupils.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is no alternative childcare provision.

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

- Improve teaching so that all year groups make rapid progress by:
  - ensuring lessons have consistently brisk pace and high expectations
  - providing sufficient challenge for more able pupils
  - planning lessons more thoroughly so that learning is effective in all phases of lessons, including during closing activities.
- Increase the impact of leadership and management on pupils' achievement through:
  - developing the range of subjects offered so that it provides a broader range of opportunities to meet the aptitudes, needs and interests of all pupils
  - making sure that the monitoring of teaching and learning clearly identifies areas for improvement and that these are rigorously followed up by leaders and managers
  - developing the governing body's understanding of national assessment information so that it can challenge the school more robustly.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- In Years 1–6, progress is too slow and overall, pupils' achievement requires improvement. Because teaching is not good in all classes, progress in Years 1 to 6 is not rapid. Pupils' levels of attainment have risen a little over the last three years, but remain broadly average at the end of Years 2 and 6. The school has worked effectively to close the gap between subjects; writing standards have improved in recent years so that they are now on a par with those in reading and mathematics. The organisation and delivery of phonics teaching (that is, linking sounds and letters) is sound. Pupils' achievement in this area is in need of improvement.
- There are few significant variations in attainment and progress between different groups of pupils, including those on school action, school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs. However, the school acknowledges that because some high ability pupils are not 'pushed' enough in some lessons, fewer than expected are reaching higher levels in both English and mathematics in tests taken at the end of Year 6. Pupils entitled to pupil premium funding benefit from the school's wise decisions about how to allocate these funds; they receive support that is well chosen to meet their various needs and, as a result, make progress at a similar rate that of to their peers.
- The school uses the information on how well different groups of pupils are progressing to quickly identify where variations in progress may be developing. The extra support that follows promotes equality of opportunity well and ensures there is no discrimination. It ensures that the achievement of all groups of pupils, including those on school action or action plus, is consistent.
- Where teaching is stimulating, pupils enjoy learning and make better progress. An outdoor science lesson that was a part of the forest school initiative saw Year 3 pupils exploring the attractive woodland that forms part of the school grounds. They were encouraged to develop their understanding of the natural world through doing their own small projects, such as constructing a den. The teacher's enthusiasm, high expectations and excellent behaviour management meant all pupils stayed firmly on task, developing a good understanding of the nature of British woodlands.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and aptitudes that are below those expected for their age, especially their communication skills. The well-organised Reception class enables them to make a good start to their education; they make good progress and they join Year 1 well equipped for the National Curriculum and with attainment that is average for their age.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too inconsistent and therefore requires improvement. While there are elements of good practice, too many lessons fail to drive learning forward energetically. Teachers' expectations can be too low so that the pace of learning diminishes as the lesson proceeds. This means that pupils do not learn as much as they could.
- Closing sessions are not always planned in detail, so opportunities to check up on and consolidate learning are lost. Most lessons benefit from activities designed to stretch all levels of ability but some do not sufficiently challenge the more able. Pupils are generally well managed to keep them on task but some sessions are too dominated by teachers and so do not give sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop independence.
- However, there are elements of good practice in teaching. Pupils enjoy most lessons, particularly where teachers share their enthusiasm and expect everyone to join in and learn. For example, Year 6 pupils reported that they particularly like mathematics lessons because they included numerous enjoyable quizzes.
- Outdoor activities are a feature of the school, using the extensive school grounds, and pupils enjoy exploring the woods. Where teachers link experiences such as visits to writing activities,

pupils often produce interesting pieces of writing but sometimes opportunities to develop literacy skills through following up on practical activities are missed. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good because it is well planned and resourced; adults promote children's skills, particularly language skills, well.

- Teachers mark pupils work thoroughly as a rule, offering support and friendly advice. However, pupils' targets are too general and rarely updated so that pupils have limited awareness of the next steps in their learning. Older pupils lack a clear understanding of the National Curriculum level at which they are working.
- Regular assessments provide the school with useful information about how pupils are getting on. These are recorded in an accessible way so that all staff have access to data that tracks each pupil's progress. One outcome of this is to identify pupils where progress may be faltering. When this happens, the school acts quickly, selecting from a menu of possible interventions. Skilled staff then deliver well-targeted extra sessions that often help pupils to overcome barriers to progress, whether they are in academic areas like English and mathematics or concerned with personal and emotional issues.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils display positive attitudes to learning and towards their school. Their behaviour is sensible, both in class and around the school. Lessons are very occasionally disturbed by disruptive activities; teachers usually manage behaviour very competently and relate very well to their charges.
- The school's focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development encourages pupils to be respectful and tolerant of one another. They enjoy taking responsibility but teaching is sometimes heavily adult led, limiting opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Parents, pupils and staff agree about the quality of behaviour. They confirm that bullying is most unusual and is well dealt with on the rare occasions when it appears. This includes all forms of victimisation, including bullying on the internet.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to be safe in their everyday lives, both in and out of school; the school provides a safe place for them.

### **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement because neither teaching nor achievement is good.
- School leaders have historically not been precise enough in how well they have identified where teaching needs to improve, nor have they followed up observations of teaching with sufficient rigour. However, they are now beginning to check the school's work more thoroughly. They make better use of the information they receive from teachers and visit classrooms more frequently. This means that teachers are now held to account for the progress that pupils in their classes make.
- The school has enjoyed regular support from the local authority in its self-evaluation activities. Nevertheless, the school has held too generous a view of the quality of what it provides and how well pupils do.
- Encouraged by the headteacher, leaders, managers and staff are now working well together to develop the school and have started to address areas for improvement. School development plans clearly identify the correct priorities and provide a clear template for the future. A new team of middle managers are increasingly moving forward learning within their subject areas and have the time, resources and skills to do so. Many changes to leadership and management are comparatively recent and are only just starting to be seen in gains in pupils' performance. Nevertheless, the capacity for improvement is clearly evident.

- The way different subjects are organised has a number of strengths but some aspects and subjects are not covered as thoroughly as others. This is because monitoring by leaders has not identified where coverage of some subjects lacks the required depth. The enrichment activities that run for almost the whole of Friday afternoon only involve about half of the pupils in the school and activities, while varied, are not well planned to meet all pupils' needs, particularly in academic areas.
- Initiatives like 'exciting writing' have worked well to raise writing standards across the school. Specific programmes such as 'Thrive' help vulnerable pupils manage their feelings and access learning. The 'Forest Schools' initiative promotes exciting active learning out of doors and encourages pupils to reflect on spiritual issues. The 'Four Rights' initiative is well known to pupils and underpins the school as a cohesive, harmonious community, promoting social and moral development effectively.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is well organised and regularly meets with school leaders. Members are knowledgeable about performance management and teachers' salary progression and have sought to improve teaching through providing appropriate training opportunities for staff. Their thorough work to ensure the school is a safe place has helped to allow safeguarding requirements to be met. They attend training regularly to develop their skills. Funding to the school is carefully checked, especially that received through the pupil premium, to ensure that it is used well to have the best impact on pupils' achievement. Governors also ensure that pay decisions for staff are fair and reflect their good teaching and pupils' progress. However, governors have not used the school and national assessment information that is available to fully challenge the school about why pupils' attainment and progress have not risen significantly in recent years.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113406
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	401365

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	198
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Richard Endean
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Squire
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23–24 September 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01803 864695
<b>Fax number</b>	01803 868067
<b>Email address</b>	admin@totnes-st-johns-primary.devon.sch.uk



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2012