

Stone St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Hayes Road, Greenhithe, Kent, DA9 9EF

Inspection dates 24–25 January 2013

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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- There has been a slight decline in pupils' progress and attainment in Years 1 and 2, particularly in mathematics.
- There have been weaknesses in teaching in the past. However, current practice indicates a much stronger picture.
- Pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6, although now improving, has been inconsistent.
- The progress of pupils who are in receipt of free school meals and who are supported by pupil premium funding has also been inconsistent. Recent changes have been made to ensure that these pupils get the help and guidance they need to make better progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress in Reception because the teaching is good. Outcomes have risen and are now well above average.
- Standards in Year 6, although still broadly average, are rising steadily.
- Pupils' achievement across the school is improving this year because, following staff changes, teaching is now good. However, this improvement is too recent to have had a sustained effect on pupils' progress.
- Reading is taught well. Pupils make mostly good progress across the school and build confidence in tackling unfamiliar texts.
- Pupils enjoy school, feel safe and behave well. Attendance has improved.
- Pupils from Gypsy/Roma families are supported well; most attend well and have sound basic skills.
- Leadership has improved at all levels. Leaders with particular responsibilities are now more effective. Senior leaders have a clear vision for further improvement. Governance is good.
- Rigorous checking of the quality of teaching, supported by suitable training to resolve any identified weaknesses, is contributing to better learning by pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons, of which nine were seen together with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, the school's middle and senior leaders, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 51 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation, including records of checks on the quality of teaching, the school improvement plan, records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding, and the tracking of pupils' progress. They also looked closely at pupils' written work and listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sue Quirk	Additional Inspector
Barbara Saltmarsh	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Stone St Mary's is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small number are of Gypsy/Roma heritage. The proportion of pupils who join or leave partway through their primary school education is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action is slightly above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- No pupils are currently educated through alternative provision away from the school site.
- The school offers a breakfast club, which is managed by the governors and formed part of this inspection.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium) is close to the national average. (There are no looked-after children or pupils from service families, groups also eligible for the pupil premium).
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has gained a number of awards recently, including Healthy School status, the Eco Silver Award, the International Intermediate Award and Kent Safe Schools Accreditation.
- There have been a number of changes in the teaching staff in the last year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, to ensure that all pupils make consistently rapid progress, by:
 - developing further opportunities to share existing good practice across the staff team
 - making sure that staff demand consistently high-quality written work from pupils
 - maintaining a rigorous focus, at class level, on the progress all pupils are making, so avoiding any loss of momentum in learning.
- Sustain actions already in place to strengthen the profile of achievement across the school to ensure that:
 - pupils in Years 1 and 2 build more effectively on the good start they receive in Reception, particularly in mathematics, so that their progress is rapid and sustained and standards rise by the end of Year 2
 - additional funding to support the learning of pupils in receipt of free school meals is effectively targeted and closely monitored to ensure that they learn more rapidly and effectively
 - the improving progress in Years 3 to 6 is sustained over an extended period, resulting in embedded good progress for all pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Prior to the end of the last school year, pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 had been relatively slow, particularly in mathematics, largely because of identified weaknesses in the teaching. This had led to a decline in standards, particularly in mathematics. Current lesson observations and pupils' work indicate that recent staff changes are contributing to more rapid and consistent progress. However, there has not been sufficient time to demonstrate that emerging improvements in learning are sustainable over time, so reversing recent trends.
- Although still broadly average, attainment by the end of Year 6 has risen over the last three years. Even so, progress in recent years has not been good, reflecting inconsistencies in teaching quality between year groups. However, staff changes and the high proportion of good teaching currently evident are now driving accelerated and frequently good progress in Years 3 to 6.
- Children enter Reception with skills close to those expected nationally for their age. They make good progress, as a result of good teaching and demanding activities, and now leave Reception at levels above those expected.
- Reception children benefit from a good grounding in the linking of sounds and letters (phonics). Older pupils also make mostly good progress in reading, with any gaps in their phonic knowledge quickly identified and tackled through effective teaching. As a result, attainment in reading continues to rise.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is also improving. This is because of better-organised support for these pupils, improved identification of their needs, better training for teaching assistants, and with more accountability being laid upon teaching staff for ensuring that pupils make good progress.
- Last year, despite additional teaching, the progress and attainment of Year 2 pupils known to be eligible for free school meals were below those of similar pupils nationally. In Year 6 their attainment was above that of similar pupils nationally, although progress was relatively weak, given the higher overall entry points for that year group. In response to these outcomes, school leaders urgently reviewed the deployment of pupil premium funding to ensure that additional teaching currently is more effective. This funding also subsidised school visits and uniform, and the work of the family support officer. These strategies contributed to improvements in attendance, pupils' attitudes to school and their basic skills.
- The school serves the small group of Gypsy/Roma pupils well in relation to their social development and well-being. Although progress in basic skills has been inconsistent, as with other pupils, the majority of these pupils, particularly towards the top of the school, have securely established basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- School data indicates that, in 2012, pupils who had entered the school later than the usual entry point made generally good progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The school has acknowledged that, until recently, pockets of stubbornly weak teaching contributed to the inconsistent progress by pupils. More effective teaching this year is supporting more rapid and consistent progress and rising attainment. All staff are now accountable for making sure that pupils achieve well.
- In the best lessons, the pace is brisk and pupils are fully engaged in learning. This was seen, for example, in two mathematics lessons in Year 5, where staff had a very enthusiastic approach, planned activities carefully so that the challenge was just right for each group of pupils, and set pupils clear expectations for high-quality work.
- The sharing of best practice across the staff team has contributed to the increasingly cohesive approach evident across all the classes. School policies lay out clearly what teachers should

expect in terms of the way pupils should present and record their work; with some minor exceptions, often in subjects other than English and mathematics, this is evident in pupils' written work.

- Improved training for additional adults in the classroom is resulting in more rapid learning by supported pupils. The school recognises the need to regularly review the way support staff are assigned to particular pupils, to ensure that their skills are used effectively.
- The way pupils' progress is checked and supported has also improved. In the past, some teachers had not given enough attention to the progress pupils were making in lessons. Most teachers are now making consistently good use of learning targets, marking and success criteria, and involving pupils more in assessing their own work. This information is used increasingly well to match work precisely to pupils' ability levels and learning needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. In lessons, it is often exemplary because staff have a consistent approach to behaviour management. Effective procedures ensure that any incidents are managed well. There have been no exclusions in the current school year. Pupils are polite and keen to learn. Most parents and carers who gave their views believe that behaviour is good.
- Pupils feel that the adults in school can be relied upon to deal with any issues. Racist incidents, inappropriate behaviour and disruption of lessons are all rare.
- The school makes good provision for pupils of diverse cultural heritages and with a wide range of individual needs.
- The breakfast club is well managed, provides good care for pupils before school starts and meets current national requirements.
- Pupils recognise that bullying may take different forms, such as internet bullying or name-calling based on physical differences. The school encourages pupils to be responsible. Recorded instances of bullying are rare.
- Pupils have a good understanding of risk, supported by the school's effective focus on personal safety, including road and internet safety. They know how to keep themselves safe in a range of different circumstances.
- Attendance has improved steadily and is now above average. Most pupils arrive punctually. The school works tirelessly to raise the attendance levels of a few pupils whose attendance is erratic.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders have high expectations of teaching and pupils' achievement. The development of a committed team of other leaders with particular responsibilities has improved further the school's capacity to promote and sustain change. Rigorous checks and staff changes have contributed to many recent improvements around behaviour and attendance, the increase in good teaching and the accelerating pace of learning.
- The school has an accurate view of its own performance and identifies the key areas for improvement. All main priorities are evident in the school improvement plan.
- Good procedures for checking and improving the performance of teachers have contributed to recent improvements in teaching quality. Decisions about pay rises are firmly linked to pupils' progress. Underperformance is tackled rigorously. There is no tolerance of teaching which is less than good. Staff appreciate the benefits of good training opportunities.
- Although there has been insufficient time for pupils' achievement to show sustained improvement, following the staff restructuring in 2012, the school has made significant progress since its last inspection in resolving some intractable issues, mainly around staffing. Effective leadership, clear vision and the high level of staff commitment ensure that it has good capacity for further improvement. For that reason, support from the local authority has been at a low

level.

- The school has improved the way subjects are planned and taught. Appropriate time is given to developing pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. The revised curriculum, based around themes and topics, is motivating and most pupils feel that learning is fun. This is reflected in the lively displays around the school. Opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills across different subjects are mostly well developed. Science is taught thoroughly in some years, but, as with the use of information and communication technology to enrich learning, provision is variable.
- Pupils' social and moral development is good. Spiritual development is supported particularly well through collective worship and strong church links. Pupils have some planned opportunities to engage with other cultures. Links with parents and carers are good, particularly those with children in Reception.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have a good understanding of data on the school's performance, most of the school's strengths and weaknesses and its effectiveness. They have supported and challenged senior leaders effectively in taking the actions necessary to bring about improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. They have taken up opportunities for training and understand their role well. They closely evaluate the effectiveness of decisions made. They are aware of the need to ensure that pay and promotion are firmly linked to teachers' effectiveness and performance management procedures. They recognise the school's responsibility to ensure equality of opportunity and to tackle discrimination and quickly take action when any issues become evident. They manage the budget effectively. They contribute to decisions about the use of pupil premium funding and the analysis of its impact, and are aware of how well this funding is helping to close gaps in pupils' achievement. They recognised that the impact of this funding on the progress of younger pupils last year was insufficient and, along with senior leaders, implemented revised plans this year which are resulting in greater improvements for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Governors ensure, along with senior leaders, that safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements.
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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	118596
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	405791

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	371
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alaric Bonthron
Headteacher	Susan Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	16 November 2010
Telephone number	01322 382292
Fax number	01322 382405
Email address	office@stone.kent.sch.uk

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