

# St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

St. Mary's Road, Tetbury, GL8 8BW

**Inspection dates** 23–24 January 2013

<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		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:

- Too many pupils have not achieved as well as they were capable of in English and mathematics throughout the school in recent years.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of how quickly their pupils can learn skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Information about how well the pupils are learning is not used routinely for teachers to plan learning activities to allow all pupils to learn new skills quickly.
- The books that pupils read outside of lessons are sometimes too easy or too hard for them, and the school does not routinely track how often they read aloud to adults.
- The attendance rate of pupils is below the national average. Too many pupils are frequently absent from school, and school leaders do not know which pupils are often absent.
- Although the school has a lot of information about how well pupils are learning, it is not always used by leaders, managers and governors to analyse where pupils are learning best and why.

### The school has the following strengths:

- Children learn well in Reception, especially in developing their reading, writing and communication skills.
- The rate at which pupils learn throughout the school has increased over the last 16 months, and pupils' attainment at the end of each year group is rising.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school makes a positive contribution to their learning and the school's caring atmosphere.
- Leaders have used support from the local authority to improve aspects of leadership and management and to further improve how well pupils learn in mathematics.
- Members of the governing body are aware of the strengths and areas to improve in the school, and are passionate about their role in helping the school to continue to improve.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors made several other short visits to lessons.
- A range of documents was scrutinised, including safeguarding documents, attendance information and school data on the achievement of pupils.
- Discussions were held with the current and previous Chairs of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority, and senior and middle leaders from the school.
- Formal and informal discussions were held with pupils, and a range of pupils' work was looked at closely.
- Inspectors listened to pupils from Years 1 to 6 read, as well as listening to pupils read in their lessons.
- Inspectors took account of 61 responses to the online questionnaire for parents and carers (Parent View) and other communication from parents and carers during the inspection.

## Inspection team

Clare Saunders, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

David Rzeznik

Additional inspector

Nicola Harwood

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school, where most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs and who are supported by school action, school action plus or by statements of special educational needs, is below the national average.
- A below-average proportion of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes at Key Stage 2. One of the classes at Key Stage 1 has a mix of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils in the mornings.
- The school does not use any alternative off-site provision.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good so that all pupils achieve well in English and mathematics throughout the school by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of how well their pupils can achieve
  - routinely using checks on pupils' learning to plan and set work that takes into account the prior knowledge and understanding of pupils so that learning activities offer the right level of challenge for all pupils.
- Improve the teaching of reading by:
  - selecting a range of texts that extend pupils' confidence and ability when reading on their own
  - expanding pupils' use of the library so they have the opportunity to read a wide variety of books often
  - increasing the opportunities for pupils to read to adults, and recording these so that the progress that pupils make in their reading is monitored.
- Raise the attendance rate of pupils and reduce the persistent absence of some pupils by:
  - developing accurate and effective systems to track pupils' attendance over time
  - using rewards to encourage pupils to attend regularly
  - ensuring parents and carers realise the importance of regular attendance and the consequences of low attendance for pupils and parents and carers.
- Develop systems to accurately track pupils' progress and attainment so that leaders throughout the school are aware of how effective additional help is in raising pupils' achievement.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Too many pupils in the school have not achieved as well as they could have done during their time in the school. Although the rate at which pupils make gains in their learning in reading, writing and mathematics has increased recently in all year groups, pupils are having to learn at a faster rate to make up for poor progress in previous years.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 is just below the national average for English and mathematics, and although attainment is improving, it does not reflect the standards that pupils are capable of achieving.
- Although teachers teach pupils the skills of reading well in lessons, and pupils' attainment in reading is improving, pupils' individual reading habits are not tracked effectively and their reading records are incomplete. Some pupils have books that are too easy or too hard for them, and they are not heard to read aloud to adults as a matter of routine. Pupils do not use the library often enough to enable them to read a wide variety of texts.
- The small number of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs, and pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, make inconsistent progress in their learning of reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school. The school provides additional support for these pupils, but the effectiveness of this is not always evaluated rigorously, and some pupils make good or better progress, but others make progress that is too slow. Pupils in receipt of the pupil premium generally leave the school with attainment that is in line with their peers as measured by their average points score.
- Children enter the school with skills in reading, writing and mathematics that are below the levels expected for their age. They make good progress during Reception, especially in developing their language and communication skills, and they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage having developed the skills that they would be expected to have.
- Pupils are now making increasingly better progress in developing their mathematical skills in lessons. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 tackled a variety of activities to challenge themselves to add up increasingly difficult numbers.
- Writing skills are now developing well through the school, often linking to topic work through which pupils learn about subjects such as history and geography. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 used their skills for writing instructions to explain how to mummify a body, and in another lesson, were writing an information journal about Egypt.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching has not been consistently good enough over time to enable pupils to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout their time in school.
- In lessons that require improvement, teachers' expectations of how well their pupils can achieve are not high enough. For example, teachers do not always use information about what pupils already understand to plan for learning activities that would enable them to quickly move on to new concepts in their learning. This means that some pupils do work that is either too easy or too hard for them.
- The quality of teachers' written comments in pupils' work throughout the school in different subjects is variable. Some marking helps pupils to know what to do in order to improve their work, for example in mathematics in Years 5 and 6, but at other times, expectations in terms of correcting work, including spelling and grammatical errors, are not made clear for the pupils.
- Small-group teaching for pupils with special educational needs enables pupils to catch up with their peers in some instances. However, sometimes the tasks given to the pupils do not allow for teachers to respond easily to queries from pupils about aspects relating to their work.

- Where the quality of teaching is good in lessons, pupils engage in a range of interesting learning activities that make them think hard about what they are learning. The teacher makes it very clear what is expected of the pupils, and pupils enjoy rising to the challenges set.
- The recent introduction of additional groups for the teaching of mathematics in Key Stage 2 is proving effective in increasing the rate at which pupils tackle and become competent at mathematical skills. These small groups enable teaching assistants to work with individuals to build confidence at tackling problem solving in mathematics.
- As a result of effective teaching strategies, children in Reception learn to be independent quickly. They organise themselves around the classrooms and for snack and playtimes without fuss, and they listen to others in their groups with interest.

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

### **require improvement**

- Too many of the same pupils are frequently absent from school. This proportion is higher than that found nationally in similar schools. Leaders do not know which pupils are repeatedly absent, and cannot therefore identify whether there is a pattern in the reasons for absence.
- Attendance of pupils is below average. The school does not have effective rewards or sanctions in place to encourage good attendance. Likewise systems to make checks on attendance are not always accurately implemented nor parents made aware of the importance of good attendance for good progress.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They say there is little bullying and when it does happen, it is often name calling and dealt with effectively by adults in the school. They are confident that there is always someone they can turn to for help in the school.
- Pupils' conduct around the school at playtimes and lunchtimes reflects the positive contribution from the school of their social and moral education. They are aware of what is right and wrong, and they enjoy working well together, for example, through the school council.
- In lessons, pupils are keen to learn and show positive attitudes to all aspects of their school work. They listen respectfully to others' opinions in class discussions.
- Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, such as using the internet, and speak highly of how the school encourages them to use computers safely.
- Pupils say how much they enjoy school and communication from parents and carers supports this view. Pupils who join the school part-way through the year are especially appreciative of how quickly the school helps them settle in.

### **The leadership and management**

### **require improvement**

- School leaders do not have a coherent strategy for improving the attendance rates of pupils, nor for addressing the reasons why some pupils are frequently absent from school.
- Although the curriculum provides many opportunities for the pupils, leaders do not have a clearly defined plan for extending pupils' skills in reading when they read on their own rather than as a whole class.
- The school has a great deal of information and data about how well pupils achieve across the school. However they are not always analysed in sufficient detail to inform leaders and governors about how effective any additional support or initiatives are in improving how well pupils are learning, including those who are disabled or who have special education needs, and those pupils in receipt of the pupil premium.

- The quality of teaching has improved recently, with increasingly more pupils making the progress they are capable of in lessons. This is as a result of the school's focus on improving aspects of teaching such as the use of questioning in lessons. The school is just establishing a pattern of regular lessons observations by senior leaders to monitor how quickly teaching is improving.
  - The support provided by the local authority, through regular reviews of the school and visits by mathematics specialists and a consultant headteacher, has been effective in improving many aspects of the school. This includes improving how mathematics is taught to pupils, including many more practical activities to interest pupils.
  - A strength of the curriculum is how it promotes the social, moral, spiritual and cultural well-being of the pupils, as reflected in the pupils' attitudes towards each other and their awareness of life in other cultures as fostered by the school's links with communities in Romania and France.
  - School leaders have a detailed plan for improving the school, which has specific areas to focus on. How well the school does in achieving the targets on this plan is reviewed every six weeks by leaders and members of the governing body, and used to inform the next six weekly cycle of improvements.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The governing body is aware of the strengths and areas to develop in the school, and of the school's performance in relation to other schools. However governors do not always find clear answers to their questions as the school's data are not always easy to analyse. For example, governors are aware of how the pupil premium funding is used, but not where it has most impact in helping pupils to learn best. Members of the governing body are passionate about continuing to improve the school, and have recently had training which has furthered their understanding of the use of the school's information on learning. They have acted upon many recommendations following an external review of how the governing body supports and challenges the school. For example, they have put into place mechanisms by which they monitor how well teachers' performance is recognised and rewarded, and to tackle underperformance where necessary. Members of the governing body visit the school to evaluate how well the school is progressing against a six weekly improvement plan. They ensure that statutory duties such as safeguarding are met and that financial resources are managed well.
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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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	115700
<b>Local authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	401535

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>	283
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Tony Walsh
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Steven Etherington
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23–24 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01666 50227
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