

# St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Rickmansworth

Stockers Farm Road, Rickmansworth, WD3 1NY

**Inspection dates** 13–14 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- While attainment by Year 6 is above average, pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 is erratic and, over time, no better than that expected.
- The proportion of good or better teaching in Years 3 to 6 is lower than in the rest of the school. This leads to too much variation in pupils' progress and achievement.
- In 2012, the progress of pupils eligible for extra support by government funding (pupil premium) was relatively weak.
- Aspects of assessment practice, where teachers judge what pupils need to do to move on, are underdeveloped. The analysis of performance data showing pupils' progress and attainment is not thorough enough.
- Leaders' procedures for managing teachers' performance lack rigour. Efforts to improve the quality of teaching have not had the impact intended.
- Not all senior leaders contribute actively enough to improving achievement and teaching. The capacity for improvement is, as a result, restricted.
- Governors have a good understanding of pupils' achievement, although their oversight of managing staff performance is less thorough.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children make particularly good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes because the teaching and activities are good and, sometimes, outstanding.
- Progress in Years 1 and 2 is good. Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average.
- Reading is taught well. Pupils make good progress across the school in this skill and confidently tackle unfamiliar texts.
- Pupils enjoy school, feel safe and behave well. Attendance is above average.
- Subject leaders for literacy, numeracy and science are energetic and effective and have a vision for moving these key subjects on. They have a considerable impact, despite not being members of the senior leadership team.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, of which five were seen together with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body, the school's subject and senior leaders, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 63 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation, including: records of school 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

Annette Szymaniak

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Mary's Church of England Primary is an average-sized primary school.
- The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- No pupils are currently educated through alternative provision away from the school site.
- The school offers breakfast and after-school clubs which are registered, managed and inspected separately.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils eligible for free school meals, those in care and those with a parent in the armed services) is well below the national average.
- 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, including Healthy School status and the Eco-Schools award.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2, to ensure that older pupils in particular make more rapid and consistently good progress, by:
  - ensuring that lessons are briskly paced and inspiring
  - making sure that staff have consistent expectations of high-quality written work from pupils
  - establishing practice that is consistently effective in setting targets for individual pupils, in marking pupils' work, in enabling pupils to evaluate their own work and that of others and in ensuring that pupils know at what level they are working.
- Strengthen achievement in Key Stage 2, by ensuring that:
  - current, effective additional strategies to boost pupils' awareness of sounds and letters (phonics) are sustained and built on
  - learning support staff are effectively deployed, with more rigorous analysis of their impact
  - additional funding to support the learning of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is effectively targeted and closely checked to ensure that they learn rapidly and make good progress.
- Improve the leadership, management and governance of the school by:
  - ensuring that all senior leaders have a clear and major impact on improving pupils' learning
  - ensuring that systems for the management of teaching quality are more incisive and effective
  - developing more effective systems for the timely analysis of pupil-progress data, so that dips in performance are identified promptly and action can be taken to remedy any underachievement.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average. However, while overall progress is never less than that ordinarily expected, it has not been as rapid or consistently good in the last two years as it was previously. Progress in Years 3 to 6 varies too much from year to year, and between subjects because of differences in the quality of teaching.
- The achievement of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium requires improvement. In 2012, although the attainment and progress of Year 2 pupils known to be eligible for free school meals were above those of similar pupils nationally, both the attainment and progress of eligible Year 6 pupils were some way below those of similar pupils nationally, particularly in mathematics. Attainment of Year 6 pupil eligible for free school meals is below that of others in the school in English and mathematics. Their progress is erratic from year to year, particularly in writing.
- School leaders have now restructured the use of pupil premium funding. As well as support for basic skills, this funding has also subsidised school trips and small-group work to enhance pupils' self-confidence and attitudes to school. However, the analysis of the impact of the current use of this funding has not, until recently, focused sufficiently on accelerating pupils' progress.
- The achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has risen. Children start in the Nursery with skills slightly above those typical nationally for their age. They make good and, often, outstanding progress, as a result of outstanding teaching and demanding activities, and leave Reception at levels substantially above those expected.
- Attainment by the end of Year 2 is above average, although attainment in writing in the last three years has been lower than in other subjects. Consistently at least good and, occasionally, outstanding teaching, and evidence from pupils' work, indicate that progress in Years 1 and 2 is also good.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. Nursery and Reception children benefit from an effective grounding in the linking of sounds and letters (phonics). Older pupils also make good progress in reading, with gaps in their phonic knowledge addressed through additional teaching, so that attainment in reading has risen. A new programme to support phonics knowledge, reading and writing is proving effective, but has not been fully extended to older pupils who could benefit.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs shows a similar, erratic pattern to that of others. However, those pupils in Year 6 in 2012 made securely good progress, particularly in reading and writing. Overall provision has improved, with more rigorous identification of the pupils' learning needs and better training for teaching assistants, who are beginning to have more impact on pupils' learning.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 is good, with some outstanding practice.
- Despite some good practice, teaching requires improvement in Years 3 to 6. One weakness is a slow pace of learning because teachers talk for too long and give pupils too little time to learn independently. Another failing is teachers' ineffective use of assessment information on pupils'

attainment levels and progress. Consequently, the work teachers plan does not always closely match the abilities of individual pupils, and teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' written work are not always accurate.

- The teaching of literacy and mathematics is never less than good in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, some teaching of both literacy and mathematics requires improvement.
- The checking and supporting of pupils' progress is mostly effective in Years 1 and 2. However, there are weaknesses in assessment and marking of pupils' work in Years 3 to 6. Pupils are seldom aware of the level at which they are working. Few pupils have individual targets to focus their efforts on improvement. The marking of pupils' work only occasionally identifies what they need to do next to improve it. There is little evidence of pupils evaluating the work of others in their class so that pupils can help themselves learn how to improve. However, in Years 5 and 6 pupils often do respond to teachers' marking.
- Staff work closely together in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. This leads to consistently good practice and results. This coordinated approach is less evident in Key Stage 2.
- While additional adults in the classroom mostly ensure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are learning at least at the pace they should, not all support staff are used effectively, so that there are missed opportunities to move learning on. The school is making a more rigorous evaluation of their input and impact, but results have yet to be formally evaluated.
- In the best lessons, the pace of learning is brisk and pupils are fully engaged. In outstanding learning of phonics in Year 1, the teacher skilfully used a puppet to encourage pupils' enthusiasm. Precise learning objectives and a lively pace, together with a productive balance of whole-class and partner tasks inspired an enthusiastic response from pupils.

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

- Pupils' behaviour is good. In many lessons, behaviour is exemplary. However, pupils' vibrant engagement with learning in the lower school is not effectively sustained. The less dynamic teaching in the upper school means that older pupils are often passive learners.
  - Staff have an effective approach to managing behaviour. Useful procedures ensure that any incidents of poor behaviour are managed well. There have been no recent exclusions. Pupils are polite and sociable. Almost all parents and carers who gave their views agree with inspectors that behaviour is good.
  - Pupils think that the adults in school are responsive to their concerns. Racist incidents, poor behaviour and disruption of lessons are rare. A lunchtime support group is available for any pupil who finds lunchtime friendships difficult.
  - Pupils are aware that bullying may take different forms, such as internet bullying or in response to physical differences. The school encourages pupils to be responsible. There are no recent recorded instances of bullying.
  - Pupils have a good understanding of risk and know how to keep themselves safe in different
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circumstances. The school ensures that pupils are alert to a range of risks, including cycling and internet safety. Pupils have various roles which encourage them to support each other and their community.

- Attendance is above average. Pupils arrive punctually.

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

- Senior leaders have promoted significant improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They have ensured that above-average standards have been sustained there and have introduced changes to what is taught, leading to better phonic awareness and rising standards in reading and writing.
- Despite the efforts of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, not all senior leaders recognise the need for a corporate and more urgent approach to driving forward improvements in learning. As a result, the school's capacity for improvement has been constrained. Recently, most key improvements have been initiated at middle management level by subject leaders whose skills have been nurtured by the school.
- While procedures for checking and improving the performance of teachers are in place and decisions about pay rises are, to an extent, linked to pupils' progress, the procedures are not sharp enough in holding staff to account for progress and achievement. Leaders are acting to strengthen procedures and practice, but it is too soon to evaluate the impact on teaching and learning quality.
- The analysis of progress data, particularly for different groups of pupils, has not been sufficiently rigorous. Consequently, indications of slow progress and any potential underachievement have not been acted on quickly enough.
- Independent external support has not provided sufficient challenge in the current year to sustain all aspects of the school's work at a consistently high level. The school now has arrangements in place to resume its relationship with the local authority.
- The school provides a good range of subjects and activities. Appropriate time is given to developing pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. A range of themes and topics engages pupils' interest well. Although there are missed opportunities to develop pupils' writing and numeracy skills across different subjects, the teaching of science has mostly been sustained well. There is some use made of information and communication technology to extend learning. A good range of out-of-school activities and visits enhance pupils' experience.
- Provision for pupils' social and moral development is good. Spiritual development is supported particularly well through collective worship and church links. Pupils have some planned opportunities to engage with other cultures and international links are being developed. Links with parents are good. Parents and carers respond well to the school's efforts on behalf of their children.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors take up regular opportunities for training and understand their role and responsibilities. They lend leaders valuable expertise and challenge them over the school's performance. Governors are aware of both the school's strengths and its areas for development. Governors have, through independent analysis, a good awareness of data on

pupils' performance. They directly evaluate the effectiveness of decisions and action taken. However, while governors are aware of the need to ensure that pay and promotion are firmly linked to teachers' effectiveness, they have been less directly involved, as yet, in staffing issues. They hold the school accountable for its responsibility to ensure equality of opportunity and to tackle discrimination. They have been involved in decisions about the use of pupil premium funding and, recently, in analysis of its impact – particularly in the light of these pupils' performance last year. Governors ensure, along with senior leaders, that safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements.

## 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>	117447
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	403324

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	235
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ann Sykes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Gill
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 June 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01923 776529
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