

# Church Cowley St James Church of England Primary School

Bartholomew Road, Oxford, OX4 3QH

**Inspection dates** 20–21 March 2013

|                                |                      |              |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Good</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Good         | 2        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Good         | 2        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Good         | 2        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Good         | 2        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- In the last two years pupils' attainment and achievement have improved strongly in all age groups. Most pupils are reaching the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good and occasionally better because teachers follow the progress of pupils very closely and accurately. They plan effectively for their learning needs, especially in literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils entitled to pupil premium funding make excellent progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is much improved and is now good, and their attendance is also much better than in the last few years. They are enthusiastic learners, are well cared for and say they feel safe.
- The headteacher has led the school successfully through a period of considerable change. He is ably supported by an ambitious leadership team that has made strong contributions to improving the school.
- The governing body is very well led, and plays a significant role in school improvement, particularly through its involvement in the performance management of staff.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching has not been effective enough in guiding some more-able pupils to reach above average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Some teachers are insufficiently proactive in encouraging pupils to take care and pride in the presentation of their work, and make sure it is the best they can do.
- The school is aware of its inconsistency in communicating with parents. However, there remain occasions when parents receive insufficient information about their concerns, or have to wait too long to find out how the school is dealing with particular issues.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons taught by 18 teachers. Eight lessons were observed jointly with either the headteacher or other senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, assistant headteacher, deputy headteacher, members of the management team, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work. They examined the school's improvement plans and its checks on how well it is doing, safeguarding arrangements, health and safety records, school policies, external evaluations of the school's effectiveness and a range of pupils' work.
- Inspectors took account of 43 responses to the on-line Parent View survey, as well as a letter and a telephone call from other parents. They also held discussions with a number of parents before and after school.
- The inspectors examined questionnaire responses from 29 members of staff.

## Inspection team

|                                    |                      |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Rodney Braithwaite, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Patricia Dodds                     | Additional Inspector |
| Michael Lafford                    | Additional Inspector |

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Church Cowley St James Church of England Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Over half of the pupils come from a number of minority ethnic heritages, the remainder being White British. Almost half of the pupils speak English as an additional language, although very few are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families) is above average. There are currently no children of service families in the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school is organised into 14 single-year classes and a Nursery.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club and an after-school club.
- Since the previous inspection there have been a number of changes of teaching staff, including senior leaders.

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

- In order to help pupils' achievement reach outstanding make sure that all teachers:
  - increase the opportunities for more challenging learning activities for more-able pupils
  - give greater opportunities for pupils in Years 3 to 6 to develop their speaking skills
  - consistently encourage pupils to take pride and care in the presentation of their work, and to develop a better two-way dialogue with pupils through marking.
- Improve the school's partnership and communication with parents by:
  - giving parents a greater understanding of how staff are dealing with issues which parents may have raised
  - acting quickly and decisively when dealing with parents' concerns, and ensuring that they are kept well informed about the actions taken, and how they too can help resolve problems concerning their children.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and understanding below and sometimes well below those expected for their age.
- They make good progress in all areas of their development in the Nursery and Reception classes because teachers and the leader of Early Years have a good understanding of the individual needs of all the children and plan accordingly.
- The progress of pupils in all age groups from Year 1 to 6 has been improving consistently in the last two years. Their standards in reading, writing and mathematics are at the levels expected of them by the end of Year 6. The achievement of pupils in Year 6 last year was particularly good, and present evidence from data and pupils' work confirms that good achievement is continuing.
- Progress in learning is good for nearly all pupils including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, pupils from minority ethnic heritages, and those who speak English as an additional language.
- The school is aware though that not enough pupils have reached above average levels of attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 so preventing achievement being outstanding for all.
- Leaders have recognised where there were weaknesses in writing, for example, and have introduced a 'storytelling' strategy which has paved the way for improvement. Similarly achievement in mathematics, especially in Key Stage 2, has benefited from a concentration on improving the calculating and problem-solving skills of pupils.
- Reading standards have risen rapidly in the last year. This is because the school identified a weakness in the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) after below average results in a screening check for Year 1 pupils last year. Much more focused teaching and interventions for small groups and individual pupils have resulted in a rapid rise in progress as was observed in classes in Reception and Year 1.
- Many pupils throughout the school read widely and with enjoyment. Progress has been enhanced by a substantial increase in good quality reading books and the development of a new well-used library. However, teachers occasionally do not move pupils on quickly enough when they have finished their books or have found them 'easy'.
- Pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium have reached and sometimes exceeded similar levels of attainment to other pupils in the school in English and mathematics, as measured by their average points scores at the end of Year 6. This excellent progress is as a result of very specific provision for their needs planned mainly by the assistant headteacher.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good in the school and occasionally outstanding. However, it is not consistently outstanding enough to ensure that pupils make sustained high progress over a number of years.
- In particular, some pupils, often those who are more able, are not all yet reaching the high levels of which they are capable. Outstanding teaching, such as that seen with a group of Years 5 and 6 pupils who had difficulties with mathematics, is typified by excellent knowledge of the learning needs of each pupil, with perceptive questioning and encouragement to help them to think and work things out for themselves.
- Children learn well in Nursery and Reception because teachers and teaching assistants constantly encourage children to listen carefully and talk about their learning. Good opportunities are taken to stimulate their curiosity and knowledge through, for example, learning about all the things they see 'Bob the Builder' doing to extend their outdoor area next to the classroom.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and there has been a marked improvement

in the teaching of basic skills in both literacy and numeracy. This was seen in Year 6 when pupils were studying time and calendars, and there were good links between writing and mathematics. However, teachers occasionally miss opportunities to develop the speaking skills of older pupils by more open questioning.

- Teachers promote good learning for middle- and lower-attaining pupils because the work is carefully personalised for individual needs.
- Teachers provide stimulating learning activities which are often tailored to the interests of pupils and encourage enthusiastic attitudes to learning.
- Teachers have a much greater understanding of the wide range of data they produce on a regular basis, which indicates the progress of pupils and is used effectively in planning for their future learning.
- Teachers make sure that most pupils know and understand how they can improve their learning and set suitably challenging targets. This is mostly verbal, as marking is variable and does not invite pupils to respond sufficiently. Some teachers do not demand high enough standards in the quality of pupils' presentation of their work.
- Teachers plan closely in partnership with their teaching assistants, who are at their most effective when working with small groups, often with disabled pupils or those with special educational needs.

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

- Pupils' behaviour is good and they know how to behave safely. They say that behaviour has improved 'a lot' in the last year, and have a good understanding of the school's expectation and rewards for good behaviour. This improvement in behaviour is confirmed by scrutiny of behavioural records.
- During the inspection behaviour was consistently good, both in classrooms and outside, especially when pupils were involved in practical activities such as making chocolate crispies for Easter in Year 3.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle quickly and contentedly in to school. They have become especially aware of the need to stay safe while building goes on.
- Pupils are keen to learn and name a variety of enjoyable learning experiences such as their trips to 'Sealife' in Year 1, and art and school clubs. Behaviour is also good in the breakfast and after-school clubs.
- Pupils have different views on what constitutes bullying, but nearly all who discussed it felt that bullying had fallen considerably in the last year or so. They all know what to do if they are bullied, and say that the anti-bullying week and the award of 'golden tickets' have improved behaviour. An older pupil talked thoughtfully about how the oldest pupils should learn to take more responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Pupils are aware of the dangers of cyber bullying and know what precautions to take to avoid this.
- There are effective links to external support to meet the needs of the pupils whose circumstances make them most vulnerable or those who may have difficulty in managing their own behaviour.
- Attendance in the school has been steadily rising in the last two years and is now only a little below average as a result of rigorous procedures introduced by the school.
- Although the majority of parents feel that the school manages behaviour well, a few express concerns, frequently based on past experiences. Most parents in discussion with inspectors confirmed that behaviour in the school is much improved.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The determined headteacher, assisted by a very competent team of senior leaders, has led the school effectively through times of difficulty so that the school has made good improvement in the last 18 months. As a result, this acceleration means it has improved from being satisfactory in the previous inspection to being good now. Together with all staff sharing a strong ambition for improvement, this track record indicates the school is well placed to improve further.
- These improvements include raising attainment and progress in writing and mathematics throughout the school, and raising the quality of teaching especially through teachers' better knowledge of the progress of their pupils by using data more effectively.
- The school has also been able to bring on the leadership skills of all school leaders, who have successfully driven improvements in the achievement of pupils, especially those who are disabled or have special educational needs, and pupils funded by the pupil premium.
- There were a small number of parental responses to the Parent View questionnaire. Some of these indicated issues of concern. Further evidence from the school's own questionnaire last year, and discussions with parents during the inspection indicated that some issues were historical, especially bullying, but had been addressed, generally successfully, by the school.
- However, inspectors agree with parents who feel that issues are sometimes not dealt with quickly enough, or that the school provides insufficient information on outcomes of investigations.
- The well-planned monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, linked to professional development, is robust and supportive and ensures that there is no inadequate teaching in the school.
- More exciting learning opportunities and improvements in behaviour have strengthened the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- Use of the school premium funding is monitored in considerable detail by leaders and governors and has led to excellent progress for these pupils. The funding has been used for providing much skilled individual attention, work in small groups, enrichment of resources and the provision of wider learning opportunities.
- School leaders promote equal opportunities strongly in a thoroughly inclusive multicultural school. As a result, there is no evidence of discrimination through gender, ethnic heritage, disability or special educational needs.
- The local authority has been supportive and effective in assisting the school's improvement, especially in raising standards in English and mathematics, and improving the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This support will continue for the foreseeable future.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is very proactive in the life of the school and constantly challenges school leaders. It is led exceptionally well by an experienced Chair who with the governing body has held school leaders to account for improving past weaknesses. Governors ensure that staff performance is linked to pay progression, especially relating to the quality of teaching in the school and pupils' progress against school targets. They have a proven record of taking tough decisions, including those relating to performance. Governors ensure that regulatory safeguarding requirements are met, and that school policies are reviewed regularly.

## 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>             | 123139                  |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Oxfordshire             |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 402138                  |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                 |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary controlled    |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3–11                    |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                   |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 461                     |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body      |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Linda Rowe              |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Jonathan Walker         |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 15–16 June 2010         |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01865 778484            |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01865 774915            |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | office.3210@ocnmail.net |



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 2013

