

# St James Church of England Primary School, Handsworth

Sandwell Road, Birmingham, B21 8NH

**Inspection dates** 23–24 April 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

- Teaching is not improving quickly enough across the school as a whole. The rapid improvements made to teaching across Key Stage 2 have not been matched in classes containing younger children.
- Not all teachers routinely ensure that lesson activities match pupils' different abilities.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and less able pupils, particularly in younger classes, varies too much from year to year.
- Pupils knowledge and use of phonics (learning the letters and sounds that they make) in Reception and in Years 1 and 2 are not always secure.
- Pupils are prevented from taking an active part in some lessons because they have to spend too much time listening to lengthy explanations by the teacher.
- Leaders do not always use the information the school holds on pupils' progress in phonics to decide how best to check the effectiveness of teaching and its impact on achievement.

### The school has the following strengths

- All groups of pupils make good progress in both English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6 because much of the teaching is good. Some is outstanding in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language and more able pupils are making good progress this year.
- Pupils behave well at all times. They are polite to each other and adults.
- Pupils get on extremely well together creating a positive atmosphere in school and lessons, and pupils from many different backgrounds all feel safe and well cared for.
- The school's numerous visits and visitors enrich pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- Attendance is improving and pupils are punctual to school and to lessons.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 33 lessons taught by 14 teachers. They also made a number of short visits to lessons and after-school clubs.
- The inspectors looked at pupils’ work in books and on display, and information about their past and current progress. They also heard a number of pupils read in Years 1 and 2.
- The inspectors met with small groups of pupils to talk about their learning and to find out what they thought about the school. Inspectors also met with staff, and with representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at documents relating to behaviour and safeguarding, the school’s checks about what is going well, and school improvement planning.
- The inspectors took into account 15 responses shown in the online questionnaire (Parent View) and last year’s parent survey carried out by the school. In addition, they talked to parents informally at the start and end of the day.
- The inspectors took note of 21 staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Georgina Beasley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Anthony Green

Additional Inspector

Derek Gardiner

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St James Church of England Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are from a number of different minority ethnic backgrounds, with Caribbean, Indian and Pakistani pupils forming the largest groups.
- A high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- A well-above-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care, and those who have a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards (the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress).
- The school does not make use of alternative provision off site.
- A breakfast club is managed by the school.

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

- Improve the teaching of phonics in Reception and Key Stage 1 to ensure that all pupils have a secure base on which to make rapid progress in reading.
- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching by ensuring all teachers:
  - organise learning tasks and activities in lessons that meet the full range of abilities
  - adapt lesson activities when they find that pupils find them too easy or too difficult
  - avoid lengthy explanations and introductions to lessons that require pupils to sit passively for long periods.
- Make better use of the information that the school has about the progress of different groups of pupils to make leaders' monitoring activities more effective and ensure that subsequent actions bring about rapid improvement in those classes and groups where progress is shown to be weaker.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children start in the Reception class with skills and understanding below those for their age. Some year groups are well below expectations in reading, writing and adding and subtracting numbers. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and all develop the confidence to try new activities by the time that they start in Year 1. Some children make good progress in literacy and mathematics, but overall progress requires improvement. Attainment remains below the expected level by the end of the Reception year in most areas of learning.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have made faster progress over the last two years in reading, writing and mathematics but work in books and lesson observations shows that less able pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make slower progress than their classmates in reading and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make varied progress across the school. It is good this year in Years 3 to 6 and pupils are closing the gap with their peers. Progress remains uneven in classes containing younger pupils.
- Gaps in pupils' knowledge of numbers and letters and the sounds that they make prevent them from solving problems in mathematics confidently or working out familiar words by themselves when reading. Fewer pupils than nationally reached the expected level in the Year 1 phonics check last year.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 3 to 6. Standards are average by the time pupils leave. A higher proportion than the national average are making and exceeding expected progress in reading and mathematics this year. Pupils recognise the importance of reading, and how this helps them with their writing, by giving them ideas of not only what, but how to write in different ways for different people. The school's efforts to improve writing have resulted in pupils making good progress over the last two years.
- More able pupils throughout the school do well and rise to the challenge of working with older classes for literacy and mathematics. Year 6 pupils, too, enjoy doing demanding work. They are keen to finish off mathematics puzzles, to find out more information to support their learning in other subjects and to write stories and accounts at home.
- Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium do better than other such pupils nationally and the attainment of this group by the end of Year 6 is currently in line with their classmates in English and mathematics. Able pupils, who fall into this category, reach the same above-average levels as their classmates.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are currently making good progress from their starting points and most catch up with their classmates by the end of Year 6. Caribbean, Indian and Pakistani pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6 to reach average standards by the end of Year 6. However, the achievement of these pupils lower down the school is rather more uneven.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable across the school and, especially in the case of younger pupils, results in significant variations in progress within different subjects and across different year groups.
- Teachers do not always vary their methods enough to ensure pupils are fully involved in lessons. In phonics lessons in particular, pupils spend too long listening and watching the teacher rather than trying to read and write the words themselves.
- Teachers do not always organise activities that meet the needs of the different abilities in class. When this happens, less able pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs struggle with tasks and activities that are too difficult because they do not build sufficiently well on what they have already learned. In addition, not all teachers make changes quickly enough in lessons when they find that tasks are too difficult for some pupils.
- Teaching assistants are used with varied levels of success. Some are successful in helping pupils understand what the teacher is teaching and in working with small groups on a specific task such as helping the youngest children with their writing or ensuring that pupils measure accurately. Others spend too much time in lessons unnecessarily managing behaviour rather than supporting learning.
- Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers use a range of methods to engage pupils purposefully in their learning throughout the lesson. Teachers ask questions that deepen pupils' understanding, extend their ideas and help them think through for themselves how to research and to find answers to support their learning.
- Good support for pupils learning to speak English enables them to develop the language they need to communicate their thinking in lessons and to reach similar standards to other pupils by the end of Year 6.
- There is a positive atmosphere in all classes which supports pupils' confidence and self-esteem and encourages them to try their best at all times. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 know their targets and how to reach them, and refer to them when checking their work and making improvements.

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

- Pupils have positive attitudes to school and are keen to do well in lessons. They have good levels of self-esteem because they know that their contributions to school life are welcomed and valued. Pupils from different ethnic and social backgrounds get along extremely well due to the mutual respect they have for their own and others' beliefs and cultures.
  - Behaviour is good at all times. Pupils are polite and respectful to each other and to adults during lessons and when moving around the school. Their consideration for others starts as soon as they start school, with the youngest children learning to share and take turns quickly. Pupils who join the school in older classes and sometimes speaking little or no English receive good support from special 'buddies' who help them to settle and feel part of the school quickly.
  - Pupils feel safe in school. They are clear about the different kinds of bullying including cyber-bullying and know what to do if they have a concern. Pupils acknowledge that bullying incidents are very rare and they are confident that bullying of any kind will be dealt with quickly and effectively by whoever they report it to.
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- Pupils play a key role in the school's decision-making processes. The school council are involved in reviewing the playground space and deciding where the new playground equipment will be placed to support pupils' play and games. Pupils regularly raise money for a number of charities and show great empathy for other peoples' feelings and difficulties.
- Attendance has improved well since the previous inspection and most pupils attend regularly and get to school on time. Close and positive partnership with families who previously failed to send their children to school regularly has helped raise attendance.

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

- The headteacher is open and honest about the need for improvement in the key areas identified and is determined to ensure pupils make faster progress. All teachers are committed to securing improvements and readily take responsibility for their own performance. As a result, there have been clear improvements since the previous inspection in attendance, standards at the end of Year 6 and in writing across the school.
  - The school sets all teachers precise targets for pupils' progress in their classes and this is starting to improve the quality of teaching. Decisions about whether a pay increase is merited for individual teachers are based directly on evidence of their success in raising pupils' achievement.
  - The work of phase and subject leaders requires improvement. All have a clear view of pupils' progress which has resulted in improving progress this year. Some are less clear about why this dips in some subjects and for some groups. The analysis of information about the progress of different groups in phonics and mathematics in Key Stage 1 is not detailed enough to target how and what to look for when checking pupils' learning. As a result, steps to improve learning and progress have not always been taken quickly enough.
  - The school's rich topics promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well and the school celebrates its rich cultural diversity. Special events and thought-provoking assemblies help pupils to develop very good respect and value for their own and others' beliefs and cultures and prepare them very well for life in Britain and beyond.
  - Pupil premium funds have been used productively to employ staff to provide extra support in lessons for those pupils who need it and to work with families to improve attendance, and to subsidise trips and special events to ensure pupils eligible take part in all relevant activities and events. The school successfully promotes equal opportunities for this group of pupils and all pupils in Key Stage 2. It is less successful in ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils in younger classes.
  - The school's partnership with parents is good. Parents who spoke to inspectors and who completed the online survey were generally pleased with the school. Regular newsletters keep parents informed about school life. Classes for parents new to the country to learn to speak English are well attended because of the welcoming atmosphere people taking part give to each other.
  - The support from the local authority has had some success in helping the school to improve the quality of teaching. Support for the teaching of phonics in Reception and in Years 1 and 2 has
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been less effective.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body ensures all safeguarding and performance management requirements are in place and followed consistently, and that the breakfast club gives pupils a positive and healthy start to the day. It has a clear overview of standards and progress, knows how the school's results compare to others and understands what needs to be improved, particularly in teaching, and why. Governors have received relevant training to help them with this task. It checks closely that the spending of funds allocated for pupil premium is making a difference for this group of pupils. They ask the school questions to clarify whether pupils overall make enough progress but do not always follow up with additional questions about the progress of other groups. As a result, they have not always asked astute enough questions about why standards at the end of Year 2 are significantly below average in some years.
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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>	103401
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	412053

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 controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	414
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Father David Isiorho
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Lanyon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 September 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 523 5861
<b>Fax number</b>	0121 551 4895
<b>Email address</b>	enquiry@stjamesce.bham.sch.uk

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