

# Dorchester St Birinus Church of England School

Queen Street, Dorchester-on-Thames, Wallingford, OX10 7HR

**Inspection dates** 10–11 September 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		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:

- Progress and attainment in writing are not as strong as they are in reading and mathematics.
- Some pupils are not clear about how to structure their written language effectively.
- Topics for writing do not always inspire pupils to do their best.
- The school's support programmes do not always help disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium to make good progress.
- Teaching is not consistently good in Years 3 to 6.
- Teachers do not always make clear to pupils what they are learning.
- The extent to which work challenges the most-able pupils varies across Years 3 to 6.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Subject leaders have not had enough opportunity to observe teaching in their areas of responsibility.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, have not made sure that teaching and progress are consistently good in Years 3 to 6.

### The school has the following strengths:

- Actions taken by leaders and managers mean that teaching is improving and standards are rising.
- Children in Reception and pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well because they are well taught.
- Pupils' behaviour is good, both in class and around the school. Pupils say they feel safe.
- Governors know the school well and are asking more searching questions about improving the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 12 lessons or parts of lessons, some of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- The inspector heard pupils read and, with the headteacher, looked closely at samples of pupils' writing and assessments.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of school documents, including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, safeguarding and curriculum materials, evidence of the school's partnership work and information for families.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils chosen at random. Discussions were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 12 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke with several parents and carers outside the school.
- The inspector considered the 11 staff questionnaires that were completed.

## Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent or carer in the armed services, is low.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

- Make teaching consistently good in Years 3 to 6 by:
  - making sure pupils are always clear about what they are learning
  - giving the most-able pupils work that always challenges them
  - having high expectations of what all pupils can achieve.
- Raise achievement in writing by:
  - focusing on the structure of language with pupils
  - giving pupils inspiring topics for writing that fire their imaginations.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - carrying out plans to involve subject leaders in checking the quality of teaching and learning through observing lessons
  - measuring the impact regularly of all support programmes for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and pupils eligible for the pupil premium so that this support can be adapted in a timely fashion to accelerate pupils' progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement is not consistently good in Years 3 to 6. Not all pupils make the progress they should, especially in writing. This is because there has not been enough focus on the structure of language and sometimes expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Topics have not always inspired pupils sufficiently to fire their imaginations before writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do not all make good progress. This is because some of the school's programmes of support do not have enough impact on helping them to catch up with other pupils. Staff have not responded quickly enough to adapt this support to increase pupils' achievement.
- The school responded swiftly to disappointing end of Year 6 results in 2012 and introduced measures to improve mathematics in particular. These included an online system that promotes pupils' mental calculation.
- Small cohorts of pupils mean that results vary from year to year, but the school is showing improvement over time. For example, in 2013, Year 6 pupils all reached the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics, and a greater proportion exceeded them than had been the case in the past.
- When children join the school in Reception their skills and abilities are broadly as expected. They make rapid progress in their first year because staff plan a good range of activities for them that are tailored to their interests and needs. Children settle quickly and are excited by learning.
- Reception children soon learn class routines because of the good teamwork between the teacher and the teaching assistant and expectations are made clear.
- Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics, building on the strong foundation established in Reception. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2.
- Progress in reading is good in Reception and Years 1 and 2 and improving in Years 3 to 6. Year 1 pupils who took the reading check scored above average and pupils use their knowledge of the sounds that letters make (phonics) to read unfamiliar words. Older pupils speak with enthusiasm about the authors they enjoy.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium make similar progress to other pupils in the school and this requires improvement. In 2013 numbers were too few to report on without identifying individuals. Additional funding is spent on one-to-one and group support and extra resources for these pupils. The effectiveness of this support is inconsistent.
- There has been improvement in the achievement of the most-able pupils, who benefited from booster groups in mathematics in particular. Most of the time teachers plan work that challenges these pupils, although this is not always the case.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good across Key Stage 2. At times pupils are not absolutely clear about what it is they are learning or how they will succeed.
- Work is not always matched at the right level for pupils' abilities, so that sometimes the most-able pupils are given tasks that are too easy for them and their progress slows.
- The impact of programmes of support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and to boost the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is inconsistent. While some programmes of support do make a difference, others have little impact.
- Strengths in teaching include the following.
  - Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to supporting pupils in lessons.
  - Relationships are very positive between pupils and with staff.
  - Teachers are using an increasing variety of methods to interest and engage pupils, including new technology.

- Teachers give regular feedback to pupils in their exercise books about what they do well and how they can improve.
- In Reception, activities draw on children's interests and often link across a theme, such as 'dinosaurs', giving learning a clear purpose. For example, children enjoyed forming bones out of modelling clay, and learning the correct technical terms such as 'femur' and 'tibia'.
- Reading is generally taught well, especially in Reception and Years 1 and 2. A greater emphasis on pupils reading in guided groups is helping them to acquire a range of skills across the school.

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

- Pupils are friendly and polite and treat one another with respect. All parents and carers confirm that this has long been the case. Those who responded to Parent View agree that their children feel safe in school. Pupils know that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Pupils are usually enthusiastic about learning and speak positively about their experiences, such as when they began to understand about decimal numbers. Although achievement requires improvement, pupils' good attitudes, concentration and behaviour have ensured that progress is not inadequate.
- Pupils say that bullying is not an issue for them and where any concerns may arise they are dealt with promptly by staff. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including through social media, even though they do not experience them personally.
- Parents and carers in the playground said that pupils behave well at school and are happy. Teachers manage behaviour consistently well and pupils are clear about the different rewards and sanctions.
- Pupils respect the school's values and their spiritual, moral and social understanding is well developed, through, for example, assemblies that focus on telling the truth.
- Pupils have a good understanding about how to keep safe, such as when learning to be safe when cycling, and know about the common risks they may encounter outside school and how to avoid them.
- Attendance is high and has remained so over time, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because sometimes a few pupils do not always fully apply themselves in lessons, especially when teaching is not challenging enough.

### **The leadership and management require improvement**

- Teaching and achievement, while improving, are not consistently good across Key Stage 2. Leaders and managers have tried a number of approaches to increase effectiveness, but these have not all borne fruit.
- There has not been enough rigour in measuring the impact of programmes of support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and for those pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium. This has led to some unevenness in the performance of these groups of pupils.
- Improvements in systems to track pupils' progress over time make this information easily accessible to teachers who are starting to use it to plan work at the right level of difficulty for pupils. This helps to promote equality.
- Subject leaders are more active than at the time of the last inspection in finding out how pupils are doing through canvassing their views, informal visits to lessons and conversations with staff. They have sought to learn from best practice in other schools and applied new ideas in the classroom. This has had a beneficial impact, especially in mathematics.
- Subject leaders have not had enough opportunity to see the quality of teaching and learning across different classes to form a full view about how well their subject is being taught. The school has identified this as an area for development and there are firm plans to increase the involvement of subject leaders in checking the quality of teaching and learning.

- Teachers are set targets related to pupils' progress, and salary progression is linked to successful performance. The headteacher has a clear vision for improvement and has the backing of the whole school community in bringing it about.
  - The headteacher gives regular feedback to staff about how well they are doing and what could be improved. The school's strategic plans accurately reflect the areas for development and set clear targets that can be measured.
  - Recent changes to the curriculum mean pupils find it more relevant and enjoyable, particularly through themed days and visits. They enjoy memorable experiences, such as singing at the O2 Arena and reception children turning seven seed potatoes into 51 whoppers by the end of the season. The school has constructive plans for the spending of its sports funding involving using coaches to develop teachers' subject knowledge and evaluating the impact of the programme over time.
  - Parents and carers are positive about the school's work and are always happy to lend a hand, for example as part of a family gardening morning. This is one way that the school fosters good relationships.
  - The local authority provides the school with good support, especially in checking its work and raising achievement in mathematics.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and know how the school uses targets for teachers to improve their performance. Governors are becoming more aware of information about the school's performance and how this compares with that of similar schools. They know what is done to reward good teachers and tackle underperformance. They hold staff accountable for pupils' progress and ask challenging questions about any inconsistencies that arise. They make sure that designated funds are spent wisely, such as the pupil premium and the sports funding. They see that safeguarding arrangements meet all 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>	123129
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	426500

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>	87
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Becky Waller
<b>Headteacher</b>	Russell Leigh
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9–10 January 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01865 340081
<b>Fax number</b>	01865 340081
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office.3186@st-birinus-pri.oxon.sch.uk">office.3186@st-birinus-pri.oxon.sch.uk</a>



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

