

St Michael's on the Mount Church of England Primary School

Park Lane, Bristol, BS2 8BE

Inspection dates 24–25 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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

- Teaching is not consistently good across all classes. Work is not always pitched at the right level and pupils in all years could make better progress.
- Teachers do not always expect enough of pupils and attainment is not sufficiently high. Although pupils reach attainment levels that are similar to the national average, their achievement requires improvement.
- Leaders and managers have not consistently and accurately checked teaching and learning and fully challenged teachers to do better.
- The governing body has not had an in-depth understanding of the school in the past and so has not been able to fully support leaders and managers through a period of change.

The school has the following strengths

- The new acting headteacher and senior leadership team have started to make clear improvements in all aspects of the school's work. Attainment in English and mathematics has risen and there has been a recent upturn in pupils' progress.
- Well-targeted funds support pupils with English as an additional language and those with disabilities or special educational needs, so their progress is rising.
- Pupils enjoy school and the experiences it gives them. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and positive. Bullying and poor behaviour are very uncommon and the staff pay close attention to the safety and care of their pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's website and a range of documents, including its policies and assessment records.
- Inspectors observed 12 lessons taught by nine teachers, including four observations with senior staff. Meetings were held with staff, pupils, parents, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 24 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Carolyn Carnaghan, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Devinder Singh Riat

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is below average in size when compared with all primary schools. The proportions of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and eligible for pupil premium support (additional money allocated to schools by the government for specific groups) are above average.
- There has been a period of disruption to the leadership of the school over the last year; there is currently an acting headteacher.
- Pupils come from a diverse range of ethnic groups, the largest of which are White British and African. About a third of all pupils do not speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported on school action is below average. The proportions supported on school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are also below average. The school has a higher than average turnover of pupils.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that all pupils make rapid progress and attainment is raised by:
 - ensuring teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils and learning is encouraged through well paced lessons and challenge for all abilities
 - making sure all lessons are effectively planned and behaviour improves by ensuring that pupils never have to wait for others to catch up, fully understand their own learning and realise their ambitions
 - ensuring phonics is taught consistently well throughout the school.
- Raise the impact of leadership and management on pupils' achievement and attainment through:
 - ensuring that teaching and learning are accurately checked up on, so weaknesses and areas for improvement are clearly identified and followed up
 - building the governing body's understanding of the school, so the governing body is able to provide more robust challenge and further support for the new senior leadership team.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is too slow and their achievement requires improvement. Teaching has not been good enough to raise pupils' attainment sufficiently and consistently in Years 1 to 6. Attainment rose in 2013 after a period when it was too low; this year it is broadly average in Years 2 and 6. The school is working to close gaps between subjects but there are still differences in progress between reading, writing and mathematics.
- The teaching of phonics (linking sounds and letters) is not consistent across the school and sometimes pupils have difficulty with reading. However, a focus on reading is ensuring that all pupils now read widely and parents and carers help support this push at home.
- Mathematics results have improved because of a focus on how the subject is taught, for instance by having more than one teacher delivering lessons at any one time, for different groups of pupils.
- There are differences, in some classes, in progress between groups of pupils, including those on school action, school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs. These gaps are rapidly closing. The progress of boys, which has historically been slower than that for girls, is currently improving.
- More pupils are now reaching higher levels in the national assessments and tests in Years 2 and 6. Pupils entitled to pupil premium funding are clearly benefiting from the school's planning and allocation of these funds. The support they receive meets their wide ranging needs and, as a result, they make progress that is close to that of their peers. However, the gap in attainment is wide; in Year 6 last year this group of pupils was two years behind its peers in reading, writing and mathematics. The gap was much narrower in other years, however; in Year 2, pupils were one term behind in reading, writing and mathematics. The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well.
- In the best lessons, pupils make sustained and rapid progress, such as where pupils worked with a dedicated mathematics teacher or learning assistant, on tasks very well matched to their needs. The warmth and enthusiasm coming from all parties made learning enjoyable. Other lessons are less well planned and this sometimes results in progress coming to a halt because pupils have to wait for others to catch up with them. When this happens, pupils become restless, lose concentration and do not make the progress they are capable of.
- When children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage many have English as a second language, so the building of communication skills is of the essence. Teachers ensure children's needs are assessed and recorded, but this has not always happened as quickly as it could. This has meant that later assessments of how well pupils are developing have not been accurate enough.
- The well-designed facilities for Reception Year children provide an effective start to the school, although their skills in the first steps of writing have not been as strong as they might have been. Children make better progress in confidence building and in looking after themselves, which help them when they join the main school. Their attainment by the end of Reception is below average in some elements of their development but, in other areas, they are well prepared to start in Year 1, such as in their personal development.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is too inconsistent across the school. Teaching that is less successful does not deliver enough progress because it lacks ambition and drive. Activities become too held back by plans that are not working, or do not stretch the more able. This can then result in slips in behaviour: too much chatting and going off task.
- Pupils' assessment has not always been as regular as it could have been. The new school leaders have now put in place more accurate and timely sharing of the results of tests and evaluations. This has already led to improvements in pupils' progress because teachers are more

aware of pupils' needs and so work can be better tailored to the pupils.

- Pupils do not always use skills that link letters to sounds across all subjects because there is a legacy of less effective teaching in this area.
- Teachers' best practice is characterised by enthusiasm for the subject, and flexibility that allows for pupils to go forward and explore their ideas further. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, some pupils made the decision to tackle a very difficult problem that they then shared with the whole class. Plans were then made to all come back to this and have another go at finding the answer. In a Year 2 literacy lesson, where a large proportion of pupils have English as an additional language, a dedicated specialist teacher helped these pupils practise their 'bossy words', something they enjoyed trying out on each other.
- The small, but well designed, outdoor spaces are often used to add excitement to learning, such as a dinosaur egg hunt. Here, pupils were very excited to work in teams as scientists, reporters and recorders for what they discovered. This lesson was carefully linked to work going on in Bristol around the discovery of archaeological remains. Such lessons lead to enthusiasm for writing and communication. Where progress slows down, it is because pupils are not challenged to harness their ideas, or insufficient planning does not embrace the needs of all pupils.
- Extra sessions are well targeted to help pupils overcome barriers, be they through improving their skills in academic subjects, or by helping with speaking and listening in English as an additional language.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Behaviour slips when teaching is less than good, with chatting and wandering off task, or even around the classroom. Pupils have not yet all mastered the skills of listening carefully and patiently when it is necessary to do so. Where teaching is at its best, pupils behave very well. Their attitudes are positive and their enthusiasm for their school is clear to see. Teachers foster good relationships with pupils and also with their parents and carers.
- In the playground, some pupils play too raucously for others and do not always show they understand their need to share the space. The school is working on ways to help pupils make more of their break times and lunch times.
- The school's curriculum has a keen focus on pupils' opportunities for strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils enjoy sharing singing assemblies, taking time to think about their lives and those of others. They enjoy links with many other local organisations that help enrich experiences in and out of school. This means pupils can take part in varied sport and arts activities from which they clearly benefit, such as dance and music.
- Parents have few concerns about behaviour and they, and their children, report that bullying, or any forms of victimisation, including on the internet, are extremely rare. The school is seen to deal with any instances of poor behaviour very effectively, so parents feel supported and are generally very happy with the education their children receive.
- Pupils understand how to be safe in and out of school and the school is a safe place for them.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- The leadership and management require improvement because teaching and the achievement of pupils are not yet consistently good.
- In the past, the school has not always been clear enough about the identification of pupils' individual needs. Although progress rose last year and is currently continuing to do so, inconsistencies in teaching led to writing and mathematics results slipping. Initiatives in writing, to ensure pupils use these skills to express their interests and what is going on around them, are beginning to raise progress further. Similarly, improvements in the deployment of staff are evident in the recent improvement in pupils' achievement.
- The local authority provides good support to enable the school to improve.

- The school makes good use of the primary school sport funding, although it is too early in the school year to measure its impact. The enrichment activities the school organises, involving professional organisations such as the BBC, local sports clubs and arts organisations, are well targeted to provide experiences that are challenging and exciting.
- The school has been through a period of disruption and changes in leadership but now has a firm senior structure in place and a new acting headteacher. This means that staff are now working effectively and closely as a team, ready to learn from one another, allowing good practice to be shared more keenly. The school has the capacity to continue to improve.
- The new headteacher has strengthened the staff team through good communication and ambition and this is appreciated by parents and pupils. Parents are welcomed into school and express their gratitude for the openness and warmth they enjoy every morning at the school gate: the daily 'good morning' in their home language, be it English or one of the many others that are spoken by this close and caring school community.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well organised and now meets regularly to share and discuss the needs of the school. The governors have not always felt in possession of sufficient detail about pupils' attainment as it compares with national averages, or the quality of teaching, but this is changing. They are now more confident to ask the school's leaders and managers challenging questions regarding the school's effectiveness. They are knowledgeable about teachers' performance management and salary progression and are supporting the headteacher in providing appropriate training opportunities for staff. Members of the governing body have ensured the safety of all pupils. They make sure that funding to the school is carefully checked, especially that received through the pupil premium, so that it is used well and has an impact on pupils' achievement.

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

Unique reference number	109148
Local authority	Bristol
Inspection number	426952

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Hawkins
Headteacher	Stuart McClelland (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 June 2011
Telephone number	0117 903 0434
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