

St Stephen's Church of England Junior School

Lansdown Road, Soundwell, Bristol, BS15 1XD

Inspection dates 25–26 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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 school that requires improvement. It is not a good school because:

- There is not enough good and outstanding teaching to enable all pupils to make expected progress across the key stage and reach standards at or above those expected for their age.
- Information from assessments is not used well enough to set work which provides the right level of challenge for all pupils.
- Teachers do not consistently check that all pupils understand the new learning during the lesson so when they start to work on their own, they sometimes get stuck.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action do not always have the help they need to catch up.
- The behaviour of some pupils is not good enough and teachers do not always respond quickly enough to ensure that learning is not affected.
- Middle leaders have not yet developed the skills they need to bring about the improvements necessary in their subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- Standards in writing have improved.
- The percentage of more able pupils making better than expected progress across the key stage is higher than national.
- Teachers help pupils to understand what they are going to learn in the lesson and what they need to do to be successful.
- Marking helps pupils to know what they have done well.
- Pupils feel safe, and parents agree.
- There are good relationships at all levels; pupils get on well together and the school is a harmonious community.
- Very good support is provided for pupils and their families who are experiencing challenging circumstances.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 22 lessons and parts of lessons.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other leaders in school, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 24 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as the views of parents from discussions in the playground.
- Information about how well school leaders know how good the school is and their plans for school improvement, as well as assessment information, minutes of meetings of the governing body, teachers' planning, pupils' work and safeguarding procedures, were examined.
- Inspectors analysed 34 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Jeanne Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Kevin Lynch

Additional inspector

Lesley Voaden

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Stephen's is a slightly larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding (extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families) is slightly above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly lower than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum standards set for attainment and progress.
- The headteacher started at the school in September 2013

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - using the information about how well pupils are doing to set work which provides the right level of challenge
 - checking that all pupils understand the new learning in the lesson, especially those pupils who are not working with an adult
 - ensuring that disabled pupils and those who are supported through school action are given the support they need to catch up with their peers.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have the same high expectations as in the best classes
 - consistently applying the school's behaviour policy.
- Develop the skills of middle leaders so that they are able to demonstrate outstanding teaching and provide the levels of challenge and support necessary to raise standards in their subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Not enough pupils make expected progress during their time in school. This means that too few are reaching or exceeding the standards expected for their age by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The number of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading has been slightly below the national average for the last three years. The improvements last academic year now mean that standards overall are broadly the same in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Progress in mathematics is broadly in line with what is expected, though the number of pupils reaching the expected standards has fallen.
- The progress of pupils who are eligible for the additional funding through the pupil premium has improved and is now similar to that of their peers, but this has not yet enabled them to catch up and reach the same standards as their peers.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action are performing relatively less well than their peers, in spite of the extra help they receive. This is because the help is not always precisely matched their needs.
- Standards in writing show an upward trend, particularly at the higher level. This is because of the focus there has been on improving outcomes in this subject, including through providing opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in other subjects.
- More able pupils make good progress, particularly in writing and mathematics because the work they are given provides the right level of challenge, both when they are working alone and when they are working with an adult.
- Information about how well pupils are doing is regularly collected and is now being shared with teachers. This information needs to be used more precisely during the termly meetings between leaders and class teachers about the progress of individual pupils, to identify which pupils are at risk of falling behind and then put in place effective ways to help them to improve.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good enough across the school to enable pupils of all abilities to make the progress that is expected.
- Teachers plan work to provide different levels of challenge for the pupils. However, they are not always successful because they do not sufficiently take into account the information they have from assessments about what pupils can already do and what they need to do next.
- More able pupils usually make good progress because they are given the right levels of challenge and they use their prior knowledge and well-developed independent learning skills to get on with their work. Less able pupils are given appropriate support when working with adults, which helps them to make reasonable progress.
- However, teachers do not always explain the new learning well enough throughout the lesson and they do not check that all pupils have understood before moving on. This means that when the pupils are working on their own, they get stuck and their progress suffers, particularly for the middle ability pupils.
- Teachers consistently share with pupils at the beginning of lessons what they are expected to learn and what they need to do to be successful. This supports their learning and helps the pupils to focus on the skills they need to develop in the lesson. In an outstanding lesson in Year 4, pupils were able to improve their writing very successfully because the teacher helped them to identify the aspects of their writing that they needed to consider, resulting in one pupil very proudly announcing that she had added an adverbial clause.
- Pupils are aware of their individual targets for improvement and these targets are referred to in lessons so that they are kept alive in pupils' minds.

- Teachers mark work carefully and their comments tell pupils how well they have shown that they understand the learning in the lesson. They also give the pupils a 'next step' and time in class to complete the activity. However, frequently the next step is another example with the same level of challenge, rather than providing a new challenge or an opportunity to apply the learning in a new context.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are inconsistent. In too many classes, pupils are easily distracted and they do not concentrate well enough on their work.
- In most classes, teachers have high expectations of behaviour. In these classes, the pupils respond well and they show good attitudes to learning, both when working alone and with others. However, some teachers do not check regularly enough that all pupils are getting on with their work and they allow pupils to continue to talk when they should be listening.
- Outside lesson times, pupils do not always respect the need for courtesy and good manners towards each other and adults. However, when expectations are made clear, such as at the end of assembly, pupils show that they can behave well.
- Parents, pupils and staff say that behaviour has improved over time, and this is shown by a reduction in the rates of exclusion. The detailed records that the school keeps about more serious incidents show that good support is given to pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour and that exclusions are used only as a last resort.
- The behaviour policy has recently been reviewed and pupils think that the rewards and the sanctions are fair. They enjoy the opportunity to get involved, such as at the end of assembly when the oldest pupils give stickers to the younger pupils who they think have behaved well. However, not all teachers use the policy consistently when managing the behaviour in their classes.
- Pupils and parents agree that the school is a safe place because leaders place high emphasis on safety and security. Pupils are not worried about bullying and they say that on the rare occasions when it happens, it is dealt with well. There are regular reminders sent home about how to keep children safe when they are on the internet and parents value this support.
- Attendance is in line with the national average. Rates of attendance are carefully tracked and the school has good systems in place for making sure that parents and pupils know that regular attendance is very important.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Over time, the actions of leaders have not brought about rapid enough improvements to pupils' achievement. This is because information from the results of national tests and from assessments during the year is not used well enough to compare what is happening in the school with what the best schools are achieving nationally.
- The leadership team is very new. Some middle leaders have only recently taken on their responsibilities and they are still developing an understanding of their roles. There is a programme of training in place to help them to develop the skills they need to raise standards and to provide models of outstanding teaching and learning. They appreciate the meetings they have had with the headteacher to look in detail at the data about progress and attainment. These meetings have helped them to understand the priority areas for improvement in their subjects.
- The newly appointed headteacher has quickly gained a clear understanding of what the school does well and what needs to improve. The latest information about achievement, as well as informal observations of teaching and a questionnaire for parents, has been used to develop a plan which clearly shows the actions that need to be taken to raise standards in the short term. A timetable for looking in detail at all aspects of the school, including the quality of teaching, is also in place so that the most up-to-date information is used to make the changes that are

needed in the longer term.

- The school's vision is underpinned by Christian beliefs and values. These values are modelled effectively by all members of staff and reflected back by pupils.
- There are no consistent differences in the treatment or progress of any particular groups of pupils, showing that the school is promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.
- Leaders do their best to make sure that the experiences the pupils have during their time in the school are meaningful and prepare them well for the next stage of their education. They are especially effective in supporting pupils and families who are going through challenging times.
- The curriculum gives high priority to promoting pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils get on well together and they have a clear understanding of right and wrong. There are good links with a school in Uganda and assemblies are sensitive opportunities for pupils to reflect on their understanding of faith.
- Results of the most recent national tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 6 show an improvement on previous years because of improvements to the quality of teaching. This shows that the school has capacity for further improvement.
- Parents are happy with how their children are getting on and most parents who responded on Parent View say that they would recommend the school to others.
- Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are secure.
- The local authority recognises the additional challenge that the school needs in order to improve further and has appropriate support in place.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very keen to make sure that the school rapidly improves and they recognise that, in the past, they have not used information about how well the school is doing, compared with schools nationally, to hold leaders to account. They have carried out an audit of their skills and they are attending courses to improve their skills further. They know about how performance management helps improve the quality of teaching, including how good teachers are rewarded by progression through the pay scale and how underperformance is tackled. They monitor spending carefully and whether the funding from pupil premium is being spent wisely.

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	109167
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	426732

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	350
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Becky Drake
Headteacher	Louisa Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	28–29 February 2012
Telephone number	01454 867175
Email address	ststephensjunior.school@southglos.gov.uk

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