

Royston St John the Baptist Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Vicarage Lane, Royston, Barnsley, S71 4QY

Inspection dates

8–9 October 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		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

- During Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils do not make consistently fast progress from their starting points in English and mathematics. This means that their achievement requires improvement in order to be good.
- Not enough of the most-able pupils reach the higher National Curriculum levels by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is too variable. There is not enough teaching that is good or better.
- The work set for different groups of pupils is sometimes too similar. As a result, it may be too hard for some and too easy for others.
- Too often, the way in which pupils' books are marked does not help them to improve their work. Written comments are sometimes vague. Pupils are not always expected to take notice of the advice they are given.
- The pace of school improvement has been slowed by a shortage of opportunities for all leaders to help to develop teaching and learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Reception Year, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well.
- There is some good and outstanding teaching. Pupils' learning moves on quickly during these lessons.
- The skills of teaching assistants make big contributions to lessons and learning.
- Pupils are happy in school, feel safe and behave well.
- Most pupils attend school regularly.
- The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. It gives pupils plenty of opportunities to learn through first-hand experiences such as handling dinosaur bones.
- A range of steps taken by leaders, managers and governors are already leading to improvements, in teaching for example.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 12 lessons. Two of these were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- A range of documents were looked at including: information about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance; a summary of the school's self-evaluation; samples of current and past pupils' work in literacy and mathematics; the school's plans for its future development.
- The 40 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account in addition to the outcome of the school's own most recent questionnaire.

Inspection team

Rosemary Eaton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Barbara Martin

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs and are supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement by improving the quality of teaching so it is consistently good or better. Focus particularly on ensuring that:
 - teachers plan lessons so work and learning resources enable all groups of pupils, particularly the most-able, to make fast progress in learning
 - marking informs pupils exactly what they have done well and how they can improve their work
 - pupils always act upon the advice teachers give them to help them improve.
- Improve leadership and management in order to accelerate the pace of school improvement by building on the work done already to provide more opportunities for all staff with leadership responsibilities to check on and improve the quality of teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average. This does not demonstrate that, from their starting points, they have made consistently good progress during Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- The school makes regular and accurate judgements about the progress made by each pupil. Last year, these showed that some pupils in each year group made faster progress than is expected of pupils nationally. However, others just made an average amount of progress with some making less than this.
- The school has rightly identified that the learning and progress of its most-able pupils require improvement in order for their achievement to be good. Not enough of these pupils reach standards above the nationally expected levels in the tests at the end of Year 6. However, a minority reach Level 6, the highest level, in mathematics.
- There is no clear pattern of underachievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Stronger performance one year is not consistently maintained or seen in every year group. Improvements in one subject are often matched by a decline in another.
- In 2013, more Year 1 pupils, than seen previously, reached the expected standard in the check of their ability to use phonics (the sounds made by letters) to help them read. Year 2 pupils who failed to meet the expected standard in 2012 are currently receiving extra support and making good progress in reading skills.
- In writing, pupils are taught skills such as spelling and the use of punctuation. They find it hard to apply their skills when writing stories or accounts. The work of even the most-able pupils often contains many basic errors.
- Pupils' mathematics books show that they do not always move on quickly enough. They may complete quantities of similar calculations when it is clear that these are unnecessary because the skills have been mastered already.
- In 2012, the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was one term behind that of other pupils in English and one year behind in mathematics. Although the progress made by these pupils was slower than that of other pupils, it was faster than in the previous year as a result of the effective way in which the school spent the pupil premium funding.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs typically achieve well. Staff spot quickly when pupils need additional help. Teaching assistants have good levels of expertise and leaders ensure the involvement of specialists in areas such as speech and language or sensory impairment.
- The school makes great efforts to provide equal opportunities for different groups of pupils. This is seen, for example, in the way governors ensure that experiences such as residential visits are available to all pupils, regardless of their circumstances.
- Children achieve well during the Reception Year. Good teaching means that children settle quickly and start learning straight away. By the end of the year they are prepared well for Year 1.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- During the inspection, examples were seen of good and outstanding teaching. However, some lessons, pupils' books, national test results and the school's records of pupils' progress show clearly that teaching is not leading to consistently good or better achievement and so it requires improvement.
- The information gathered about what pupils know, understand and can do is not always used

well by teachers. Sometimes there is not enough difference between the work set for more- and less-able pupils. Typically, this means that the most-able pupils are not challenged to think hard enough and so their learning does not move forward. On other occasions, less-able pupils are not provided with the equipment or prompts that would help them to do their work without relying on adult help.

- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but the comments they write are frequently not helpful enough. Pupils are sometimes praised too highly, giving the impression that quite ordinary work is as good as it can get. If points for improvement are noted, these are not always precise enough. Teachers do not necessarily insist that pupils act on their advice and so opportunities to speed up learning are missed.
- Teaching assistants regularly contribute much to lessons and learning. They make sure that the pupils they support are able to play a full part in lessons and are careful to encourage them to do things for themselves, for example to attempt to spell new words.
- Lessons often generate a lot of enjoyment. This is invariably when pupils are actively involved in their learning, finding things out, working together and thinking hard. In the Reception Year role-play area, children learned well as they dressed as vets, discussed cases, operated on toy animals and wrote down the treatment given to each patient.
- Leaders have ensured that teachers nearly always inform pupils what they are going to learn rather than what they will do. In some classes, pupils consider how well they have met these 'steps to success' and identify how they can improve their work, developing their ability to think for themselves.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils say that they enjoy school, commenting, for example, that 'it's good fun'.
- Parents are pleased with behaviour at the school. Pupils, too, believe that behaviour is good.
- During lessons, pupils show that they are keen to learn. They are ready to volunteer to answer questions and work sensibly on their own, with partners or as part of a group. Lessons are seldom interrupted by inconsiderate behaviour.
- Outside, pupils are lively and enjoy being active at break and lunchtime. Records kept by the school show that, occasionally, individuals are unable to manage their emotions and incidents of unacceptable behaviour occur.
- Through the online questionnaire, a small proportion of parents expressed some concern about bullying. However, pupils understand that bullying is different from outbursts of anger and are certain that bullying does not occur. Records and the comments of parents who spoke to inspectors appear to confirm this.
- Pupils are taught about different types of bullying and that racist and homophobic language is not acceptable. They learn how to stay safe when using the internet and mobile phones for example.
- Pupils with special educational needs relating to their behaviour are managed well. There are clear improvements in the behaviour of individuals which enable them to play a full part in school life.
- Attendance has improved over recent years and most pupils are regular attenders.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher, with the senior team, is driving improvements in teaching and achievement. Although it is too soon to judge the impact of some actions, there are signs of success, such as more and better use of demonstrations to teach skills and show pupils exactly what is expected of them. However, leadership and management still require improvement, because the pace of school improvement is not fast enough.

- The headteacher has begun to distribute more tasks, such as responsibility for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, to staff. The systems for checking on the quality of teaching are well organised. They have started to include 'ward rounds' that enable all staff to spend time in each classroom and note good features and where improvement is needed. This is one way in which all staff with leadership responsibilities are becoming more involved in moving the school forward.
- Their checks on teaching and the careful tracking of pupils' progress provide leaders with a balanced view of the school's strengths and what needs to improve. However, some of their judgements about the school's performance are too generous as they do not take enough account of pupils' achievement.
- The curriculum has developed well since the previous inspection. Children in the Reception Year now have much better opportunities for learning outdoors. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 enjoy learning through topics such as the Second World War, going on related visits and taking part in activities such as a 'VE Day party' with parents.
- Pupils' involvement in a wealth of musical activities, and in the life of the local church, is an example of the way in which the school effectively promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils have good opportunities to take part in wide-ranging sporting activities. The new funding for sport is being used to the full to improve pupils' health and skills. For example, there is to be more involvement of professional coaches in sports such as netball, to develop sports teaching by school staff.
- Local authority support for the school has increased over the past year. The school values the help it is receiving, for example to clarify priorities and plan for improvements.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet government requirements. The school ensures that all adults working with children are checked to make sure they are suitable.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They look at the results of national tests and other information about pupils' achievement and are conscious of the need for improvement. The quality of teaching is discussed regularly at meetings and governors know where teaching is stronger and weaker. They understand how teachers' performance is managed. Governors check that the pupil premium has been spent wisely by looking at the records of pupils' progress.

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	106636
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	425912

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	242
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Dr Matthew Bullimore
Headteacher	Mrs Jill Ryan
Date of previous school inspection	15 October 2008
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