

# St Mary's CE VA Primary School

Church Lane, Portbury, Bristol, BS20 7TR

**Inspection dates** 15–16 October 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		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 or better in all classes.
- Pupils do not always make the progress they are capable of, especially when lessons move too slowly, the tasks are not challenging enough for the more able and resourcing is weak.
- In lessons that lack challenge, the pupils' learning is not focused enough. Their attitudes are not as positive as they could be because pupils have not been motivated or challenged by the lesson or the resources available.
- The actions taken by the headteacher have not had sufficient time to impact fully on the school's overall performance.
- Systems to track, check and record the quality of teaching over time are not fully developed.
- The role of middle leaders is underdeveloped. Those teachers who are on higher salaries have little impact on school improvement.
- Activities planned in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not always take into consideration the starting points of the children. The progress the children make is not being recorded with sufficient rigour. The outdoor area lacks interest, challenge and resources suitable to the age and ability of the youngsters.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are good, regular attenders who enjoy coming to school. They are polite and conduct themselves well during playtimes and lunch breaks.
- Governors have a detailed understanding of the strengths and areas that need developing. They provide good levels of support and rigorously challenge the work of the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) observed six lessons, of which five were observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, a number of short visits to lessons were made. A range of pupils' work was looked at and other aspects of the school's work were observed.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other members of the teaching staff. HMI also met with the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- HMI took account of 28 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire and 10 questionnaires completed by staff.
- HMI spoke to seven parents and carers and considered a letter from one parent.
- HMI discussed lessons that had been seen with teaching staff and examined a range of documents, including the school's own information relating to pupils' achievements, the school self-evaluation summary, the school development plan, planning documentation, records relating to attendance, and checks on performance management documents, policy documents and safeguarding information. HMI also looked at the school's website.

## Inspection team

Lorna Brackstone, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Mary's is a smaller-than-average-sized school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion that speaks English as an additional language is much lower than that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs and are supported by school action is well below average. The proportion supported by school action plus or has a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those in receipt of free school meals and children of service families, is well below the national average. There are no pupils in local authority care and no children with parents in the armed forces.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There are four classes: a class of 14 Reception children; a combined Year 1 and Year 2 class; a combined class for Years 3 and 4; and another combined class for Years 5 and 6.
- The headteacher has been in post for one year.
- During the inspection the class teacher for Years 5 and 6 was absent and the class was being taught by a temporary supply teacher. Two other members of staff were on maternity leave. A full-time newly qualified teacher was appointed on a fixed term contract from September to cover these maternity absences. An experienced teacher has been appointed on a fixed term contract to cover a second maternity leave as part of the job share in the Reception class.
- The HMI was accompanied by a school leader whose opportunity to 'shadow' an inspection was funded by the National College of School Leaders. The inspection was also quality assured by a senior HMI.

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

- Raise pupils' achievement by improving the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better through:
  - ensuring that the level of challenge and expectations of the progress pupils can achieve are much higher, especially for the more able pupils
  - increasing the interest, pace and use of resources in lessons to keep all pupils fully engaged in their learning.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - developing the roles of middle and senior leaders
  - implementing a robust system to track, check and record the quality of teaching over time.
- Improve the quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision by:
  - establishing ways to check the children's level of development when children start school
  - using the information staff gather when observing the children to plan exciting and stimulating sessions which fully stretch their ability and can be used to track and record their progress
  - urgently reviewing the provision and use of the outdoor area.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because pupils' progress is not consistently good in English and mathematics as pupils move through the school. This includes the few pupils who have English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs. More able pupils do not do as well as they could.
- Children generally start school with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age, with some who exceed the expected level in social skills, speaking and listening, reading and number work. They do not always make the progress they are capable of because initial checks on what they can do are not made until the end of their first term in school. Although teaching staff make lots of notes on what the children are doing, the information gathered is not collected together to plan relevant activities and show the developing progress of each child.
- At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is similar to the national average. The most recent unvalidated results show improvements in the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard and rate of progress measured at the end of Year 6. Nevertheless, the proportion of pupils who are capable of achieving a higher than expected level and making accelerated progress is below the national averages.
- The recent performance in the spelling, grammar and punctuation tests was particularly disappointing. The school has responded urgently to this by having a greater focus on these basic skills. There has also been an increased awareness of the importance of handwriting and the presentation of work. This is beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of work produced by the pupils.
- Those pupils who were entitled to pupil premium did not do as well as their peers in the 2012 national tests. There were no pupils eligible for pupil premium who took the tests in 2013, but detailed progress data collected by the school demonstrate that pupils in other year groups who are receipt of the funding are making good progress. This is because they are receiving extra help to develop their reading, writing and mathematics skills. Consequently, the gap between them and other pupils has narrowed.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good because not all teachers use the information available about what pupils already know to plan challenging work. Work is not always pitched at the right level and this is especially noticeable for the more able.
- The headteacher and governors know that teaching needs to improve. There have been some improvements in the marking of pupils' work. However, not all teachers follow the agreed marking policy and others do not mark books regularly. Comments made in some books are not understood by the pupils, and there are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to respond to them.
- In a number of lessons too much time is devoted to introducing the lesson, which does not leave sufficient time for pupils to grasp new concepts and ideas.
- Activities are not always well matched to the different abilities of pupils. This means that some pupils find the work too difficult whilst others finish tasks quickly and waste valuable learning time. This affects the rate of progress and the more able pupils lose interest.
- Although some teachers introduce the lesson well using a range of resources to engage the pupils, they are not always used to best effect to support learning. For example, some pupils struggle to use the mathematical resources they have been provided with to help them with their learning. Others are expected to complete tasks that are meaningless and repetitive. The resources in the Early Years Foundation Stage are uninspiring and lack challenge.
- Where teaching is consistently of good or better, pupils make accelerated progress because teacher expectations are high. During these lessons pupils' understanding is regularly checked,

effective use is made of sharp questioning, instructions are clear and the approach is lively and fun. This was evident in a good English lesson where Years 3 and 4 pupils responded well to a session on the use of adjectives. By effectively modelling the use of describing words through an engaging role-play session, the teacher ensured that the pupils knew exactly what was expected of them.

- Most teaching assistants and additional staff provide good quality support for class teachers when they are leading learning in small groups and working on an individual basis. Very effective use is made of an additional teacher to provide challenge for a small group of more able Years 5 and 6 pupils.

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

### **requires improvement**

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are not always as positive as they should be. This is because when the activities set by the teacher do not challenge or engage them they become bored, inattentive and restless.
- Nevertheless, pupils clearly enjoy their time at school and this is reflected in their good attendance levels. Pupils show good manners, are polite towards staff, visitors and each other and proudly talk about their school. Older pupils are always willing and ready to help out with the younger children or prepare the hall for assemblies.
- Pupils are very well cared for and they feel safe. They are confident that most adults listen to them if they have a problem or need someone to confide in. They understand the importance of internet safety and demonstrate a good understanding of different forms of bullying, all of which are very rare.
- Pupils know that it is important to have a healthy diet and take part in active exercise.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View, or who were spoken to, expressed a positive opinion regarding behaviour in the school. The school fosters good relationships with parents.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- High levels of staff absence, coupled with a legacy of underdeveloped middle leadership, have thwarted the headteacher's commitment to making rapid improvements in the quality of education received by the pupils. For example, there is no leader or manager for the Early Years Foundation Stage and this compromises the consistency of its provision. The headteacher has also been required to lead on the development of teaching and learning in English and, cover the leadership of mathematics in the absence of the deputy head who has responsibility for this subject.
- The headteacher has an accurate picture of the strengths and areas that require development and is ambitious for the school. A forthcoming opportunity for a vacancy is being carefully considered so that a stronger layer of middle leadership can be developed. Following her arrival last year, the headteacher wasted no time in seeking support from the local authority to help her tackle some of the areas of weaknesses in teaching and accelerate pupil progress. Improving trends in the achievement of specific groups, such as those who are in receipt of additional funding, is testimony to the way in which she can swiftly drive improvements.
- By introducing a rigorous performance management system, teaching staff are now accountable for the pupils they teach. However, there is no system in place which tracks and checks the quality of teaching in lessons and in workbooks over time.
- Parents and pupils have enthusiastically engaged with the Reading Roll of Honour programme, which encourages books to be read out and shared at home at least five times a week. This has considerably raised the importance of reading as pupils eagerly await the results at the end of the week. An emphasis on using writing skills across all subject areas is helping the pupils to make more links in their learning.

- There is a good range of opportunities for the pupils to gain a spiritual and cultural understanding of the world around them. One teacher sensitively explained why some pupils might be celebrating a special day called Eid, and made links with the festivals that they might celebrate. Improved use is being made of the nearby church to celebrate harvest festival and other special occasions. Pupils appreciate the range of interesting subjects that they learn about, such as the Second World War, and talk enthusiastically about the trips they went on to see the SS Great Britain and the Roman remains at Caerleon.
- The school's ethos is inclusive in seeking to promote equality, and discrimination is not tolerated.
- Parents are delighted with the changes that have been made during the past year and have welcomed the eagerness of the headteacher to work alongside them. As one parent explained, 'We have noticed the vast improvements.' In particular, parents have welcomed improved communication and 'the opportunities that the children now have to participate in activities outside of the school', such as cross-country events. Parents are also delighted that after-school clubs like art club and 'knit and stitch' have been introduced. They have also welcomed their invitations to attend the regular celebration assemblies.
- The headteacher has made very effective use of the additional primary school sports funding to pay for expert external coaches for gymnastics and specialists from a local secondary school for dance sessions. By subsidising the cost of swimming lessons, there have been extended opportunities for Years 3 to 6 to swim regularly. The school is very proud of the success of the new cross-country training club and its tag rugby team, both of whom have enjoyed success at county level. The costs involved in the participation of local school sporting events are also being funded by this extra grant.
- The headteacher has established strong links with the parish church and has been proactive in engaging with other small schools and in wider county events such as sporting competitions. By using the expertise of a nearby secondary school, the headteacher is enabling more able mathematicians to fulfil their potential.
- The local authority is providing a high level of support. This has included headteacher and newly qualified teacher induction programmes, advice from the Early Years Foundation Stage team and support from another headteacher.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - New appointments had strengthened the governing body, bringing with them extensive expertise and a very varied and valued range of skills. Governors have a very good knowledge and understanding of pupil achievement and are fully aware that the youngsters at the school are capable of doing so much better. They know that there have been improvements in the progress that pupils are making and do not shy away from asking the headteacher tough questions about the achievement of those who are more able. Visits to school and working supportively alongside the headteacher on the development plan have enabled governors to have an accurate understanding of the improvements that need to be made in teaching. They have a very clear understanding of the link between teacher performance and pay and hold the headteacher firmly to account during her regular performance management reviews. Governors know that pupil premium funding is having a positive effect on those who receive it and are clear that any other additional funds, such as extra sports provision, are spent sensibly and effectively. Governors ensure that the school is a safe place and safeguarding arrangements are met.

## 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>	109272
<b>Local authority</b>	North Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	427284

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 aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	102
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Chris Sherman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lorraine Wright
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4–5 November 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01275 372066
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