

St John's Church of England Primary School

Priory, Wellington, Somerset, TA21 9EJ

Inspection dates 10–11 December 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		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:

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement. Pupils have not been making enough progress to reach the standards expected of them in English and mathematics.
- While pupils now make better progress, it is not consistently good because pupils do not always understand fully what they have learned and are not confident in applying new skills to more difficult work. Teaching over time requires improvement because teachers do not always effectively use the information they have to match learning activities to the needs and abilities of all the pupils. This is particularly the case for pupils capable of tackling harder work.
- Pupils do not always have time to respond to teachers' marking, to help them improve their work and increase the pace of their learning.
- The curriculum requires improvement because there are too few opportunities for pupils to practise their writing and mathematical skills across different subjects.
- The governing body was not aware of weaknesses school leaders identified and the actions needed to secure rapid school improvement, prior to the arrival of the new acting headteacher.

The school has the following strengths:

- The new headteacher is starting to make a difference. He has identified weaknesses quickly and has introduced revised routines and raised expectations to help remedy weaknesses in the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.
- Pupils behave well both in and out of the classroom and like attending the school.
- Teaching is improving because of the clear guidance leaders now give teachers and pupils flourish in these better taught lessons.
- Children in Reception make good progress from levels below those expected of their age.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 10 lessons and a few short visits to lessons, all of which were observed with senior leaders from the school.
- Inspectors heard pupils read from Years 2 and 6 and also held meetings with two groups of pupils including the school council. Lunch and break times were also used to talk to pupils around the school.
- Inspectors spoke to the Chair of the Governing Body, members of the school management team, a local headteacher who is supporting the school and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also met with parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- These meetings included discussions about the analysis of information on pupils' progress, documented information and records provided by the school, including records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching, checks on pupils' progress, as well as documents relating to safeguarding children. Inspectors looked at pupils' work in books and consideration was given to both past and present information about the progress pupils make.
- The inspectors took account of the responses of 19 parents and carers to the online Parent View questionnaire during the inspection, as well as evidence collected by the school, and of the 23 questionnaires completed by school staff.

Inspection team

Sarah Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Phil Taylor

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St John's Church of England Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The acting headteacher took up his post in September 2013.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average and the proportions supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are both below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for specific groups including those known to be eligible for free school meals, is above average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards; these are standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress.
- The school provides a number of after-school activities, and including film club and choir and sporting clubs, for example multi-skills.
- The school has the Healthy Schools Plus award and Eco Schools bronze award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to consistently good or better by:
 - providing clarity in all marking of pupils' work and providing time for pupils to act on the guidance offered in the comments
 - making sure that pupils know precisely how to make their work of the best possible quality and understand how much progress they are making.
- Raise the achievement and progress of pupils, especially for Key Stage 2 pupils, by:
 - strengthening pupils' opportunities to implement their core skills in reading, writing and mathematics in other subjects
 - setting work that provides the right level of challenge, especially for the more-able pupils
 - questioning pupils more rigorously to check their understanding and to extend their thinking.
- Strengthen leadership and management to sustain improvement by:
 - ensuring senior and middle leaders check the progress of pupils more closely to identify where improvements to pupils' learning are needed.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Over the last three years, pupils' progress in English and mathematics has fluctuated across classes, reflecting low expectations, weak assessment and poor checks on the progress pupils make.
- Pupils' achievement is not yet good because teaching does not always challenge pupils sufficiently, which has an adverse impact on pupils' progress particularly in Key Stage 2. However, recent changes mean progress both in English and mathematics is increasingly evident in all year groups. These have not been in place long enough to have a full impact.
- Pupils capable of harder work do not make quick enough progress, as the work does not always encourage them to think and apply their skills to more difficult tasks. For example, for some more-able pupils in a lesson on sentence writing the tasks were too easy. Pupils say they enjoy a challenge and are keen to improve their work.
- Pupils enjoy reading and they use their knowledge of letters and sounds to read more difficult words. Those taking the national phonics screening check last year reached just below average levels, and pupils sometimes struggle with the words that cannot be sounded out phonetically.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar to or better progress than their peers.
- The effective support for pupils eligible for the pupil premium means there is no attainment gap between pupils; but, along with all pupils, their progress requires improvement.
- Children enter Reception with skills and abilities below the levels expected for their age and make good progress by the end of Reception. The good quality provision means that children enter Year 1 with standards in line with the national average in all areas of learning.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement, although senior leaders' recent strong focus on the quality of teaching to raise the expectations for all pupils is beginning to have an impact.
- Over time, teachers' expectations have not been high enough and have failed to bring about rapid progress in pupils' learning.
- Although there is some effective practice, in a number of lessons, it is not firmly embedded across the school. Where the teaching often requires improvement, teachers do not ask challenging questions and activities are too easy for some to extend pupils' learning.
- Aspects of effective teaching are evident in all year groups. Teachers are enthusiastic and have good relationships with their pupils. They share the learning objectives with the pupils as well as ways of judging if they have been successful. The way that teachers question pupils to encourage them to assess their progress in some cases is effective, but this is not consistently good in all classes.
- Teachers are aware of the needs of pupils who have special educational needs, and teaching assistants make sure the pupils are given the support where needed to keep pace with other pupils' learning.
- Teachers mark work regularly, and provide encouraging feedback; however, there is inconsistency in the approach to the next steps given to pupils to help improve their work. Sufficient time is not always provided for pupils to act on the guidance teachers provide.
- Good relationships and the way teachers use praise and rewards help pupils cooperate well with the adults in the class.
- Teaching in Reception is good. Staff have a good understanding of the learning needs of the children and thoroughly assess their progress so they are well prepared for the start of Key Stage 1. During a 'welly walk', photographs were taken and then used effectively to help the children evaluate their experience on the walk.

- Parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) feel their children are taught well at the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour over time is good. Pupils engage readily in their learning and say they enjoy school. Pupils say that lessons are hardly disrupted by any poor behaviour and that should it occur it is effectively managed by the class teacher.
- The school has a welcoming atmosphere where all pupils are made to feel valued and safe. Pupils get on well with one another and show respect to adults.
- Pupils feel that adults listen to them, and they value the work of the school council which has taken the lead in charity fundraising events.
- Break times and lunchtimes are calm. Pupils of all ages play together well and take good care of each other. Behaviour is managed consistently well by all staff, including midday supervisors.
- Pupils with particular behavioural needs are making encouraging progress in managing their behaviour due to good pastoral support from staff.
- Pupils say incidents of bullying are rare. They have a clear understanding of all forms of bullying, including racism and cyber bullying, and know what to do if they encounter it. Pupils have a good understanding of risk, supported well by the school's teaching about personal and internet safety.
- Pupils attend school regularly, as efforts to reduce any persistent absence have been effective.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because neither the quality of teaching nor pupils' achievement are good.
- The headteacher has a clear plan for the future of the school and is committed to making sure that all groups of pupils make better progress. With the support of staff and the governing body, he has brought about considerable changes to the attitudes of pupils to learning in a short time and, in turn, is making them feel more confident about their learning.
- The headteacher has improved systems for tracking pupils' progress, with the emphasis on pupils making at least the progress expected. This has helped raise teachers' expectations of pupils' learning. It is too early, however, to see the full impact of these revised systems.
- Improved checks on the progress made by all pupils, including those receiving support through the pupil premium, are helping to evaluate the impact of particular activities on pupils' learning.
- The school's development plans are accurate and reflect the priorities for improvement. However, middle leaders have not played a significant role in driving forward school improvement by helping judge if pupils make sufficient progress over time.
- Parents and carers are pleased with the school and say the school is well led and that staff are approachable.
- External partnerships are a strong feature of the school's work which is increasingly making sure the very specific needs of some children are met.
- The school has focused on improving reading, writing and mathematics. At present there is not enough focus on ensuring that pupils use these skills in subjects other than mathematics and English. There are plans to develop further focus events such as studies on the book *Wind in the Willows*, which the pupils enjoyed last year to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. The additional sports education funding will be spent on developing the teachers' skills in physical education to create a far more sustainable approach to health education.
- The performance management process is well structured; all teachers have targets that clearly link to the school's overall improvement targets which, in turn, are linked to salary progression. Teachers find the process supportive, especially with opportunities to work in partnership with

an outstanding school and having the opportunity to share ideas.

- The local authority, recognising the weaknesses in the school's performance, has provided support particularly in helping the new acting headteacher develop more rigorous systems to monitor progress.
- The recent improvements to teaching, the rise in the pace of pupils' learning and the more rigorous systems to identify areas to improve more quickly, reflect leaders' capacity to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body now has a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development within the context of the community it serves, but there has not been enough challenge to ensure that pupils' performance compares well to that of all pupils nationally. Governors now have a better understanding of how to challenge leaders, with evidence of governors asking searching questions during meetings, but their greater understanding has only recently been acquired. Governors make sure that statutory responsibilities are met, such as safeguarding requirements being fully in place and effective. Governors have a good understanding of the school including the management of teachers' performance and the implementation of Teachers' Standards and how they affect salary progression. Governors monitor spending carefully and are aware of how the school is using the pupil premium funding to improve pupils' achievement. Governors have recently completed a skills audit to make sure they can fully support the school in all areas. The outcomes have helped inform training needs which are being implemented. Governors are finding the process supportive, especially with opportunities to work in partnership with an outstanding school to further enhance their effectiveness.

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	123900
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	426767

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	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hollie Cashmore
Acting Headteacher	Gareth Jones
Date of previous school inspection	29 February – 1 March 2012
Telephone number	01823 662541
Fax number	01823 660385
Email address	office@st-johns-pri-somerset.sch.uk

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