

St Mary's, Prittlewell, CofE Primary School

Boston Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, SS2 6JH

Inspection dates 16–17 January 2014

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

- Achievement in writing is not as good as in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching is not consistently good in all classes, and this is reflected in the quality and quantity of the work seen in books.
- Where teaching is less than good, teachers do not show high enough expectations of what the pupils can achieve in their work.
- While teachers mark books regularly, their written comments on how pupils can improve their work are not always clear and helpful.
- After a good start in in the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is not enough consistently good teaching to ensure that pupils continue to make good progress, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Achievement is not yet good for all groups of pupils by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' education is improving, but leaders and the governing body have not taken enough account of the impact of teaching on all pupils' achievement to produce effective action plans.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are keen to learn in class and are generally well behaved in and around the school. They feel safe in school.
- The teachers have good relationships with pupils and their parents.
- The headteacher and the governing body have a clear vision for the school and work well together.
- Pupils enjoy a range of exciting and challenging activities that engage and hold their interest. Strong teaching of the performing arts leads to particularly good standards throughout the school in this area.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 31 lessons, eight of which were jointly observed with the headteacher, deputy headteacher or inclusion manager.
- Inspectors took account of 26 responses to the staff questionnaire, 60 responses to Parent View, and the most recent school parent survey. Inspectors met parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of evidence, including the school self-evaluation document, the school improvement plan, a selection of minutes from recent governors' meeting, documents relating to staff performance management, risk assessments and safeguarding documents.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books, at displays around the school, checked on pupils' reading skills and looked closely at the schools assessments of pupils' progress.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and the local authority.

Inspection team

Judith Olivier, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Nicola Edwards

Additional Inspector

David Gutmann

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mary's, Prittlewell is a larger-than-average primary school.
- About three quarters of the pupils are White British, with a slightly lower proportion than nationally of minority ethnic groups, although there has been a slight rise in this group in the last year. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is slightly lower than national figures.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority or from a family with a parent in the armed forces) is average.
- The proportion of pupils on school action is slightly higher than average, but lower than average for pupils on school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which specify the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school offers an extended day, including a breakfast club and a wide range of clubs before, during and after school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching consistently good or better to raise attainment for all pupils across the school by ensuring that:
 - teachers rigorously monitor the work in pupils' books to ensure the quality and quantity are of a high standard
 - all teachers show that they have high expectations for what pupils can achieve by setting work that is challenging but not too hard for all ability groups
 - marking shows pupils clearly how to improve their work.
- Raise attainment in writing by ensuring that:
 - pupils are able to use and apply their writing skills and knowledge in all subjects
 - senior and middle leaders rigorously monitor the quality and quantity of pupils' writing across the school.
- Increase the impact of senior and subject leaders on pupils' achievement by making sure that:
 - the transition from Reception to Year 1 is better managed, so that all pupils are given work at the right level of difficulty
 - lesson observations take full account of the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement, to fully inform improvement plans
 - the impact of any additional support provided is carefully monitored in order to raise the achievement of all groups of pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Children typically start Reception with skills that are lower than expected for their age, and make good progress in developing their key academic and personal skills and understanding. However, progress in Key Stage 1 slows as a result of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is largely in line with national averages. Writing and mathematics were slightly below reading in 2013. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is largely in line with the national average in all subjects.
- National data from 2013 show that all groups of pupils had made at least the progress expected in Key Stage 2. Pupils who were eligible for pupil premium made slightly slower progress than their classmates in English and mathematics, and a smaller proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium made accelerated progress than pupils nationally. Their attainment was approximately six months behind in English and mathematics combined, with reading showing the widest gap.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language made better progress than their classmates but overall attainment remained below in mathematics, reading and writing. Pupils with identified special educational needs were approximately a year behind their classmates but in line with equivalent national levels. Their progress across Key Stage 2 was slightly below that of all other pupils.
- The Year 6 results reflected various differences in attainment between different groups. The school's most recent data indicate that the attainment of current Year 6 pupils who are eligible for pupil premium is below that of their classmates, particularly in writing, although their progress is similar.
- Leaders are aware that the attainment of boys and girls in English and mathematics is variable across the school. Girls attained slightly better overall in Key Stage 1, but did less well in the phonics screening test. In Year 6 girls' attainment was significantly lower than that of the boys in mathematics, but higher in writing. Senior leaders have correctly identified the gender issue in mathematics in Key Stage 2, and are tackling this through reorganisation of Year 6 teaching groups. While this is having a positive effect on girls' confidence in tackling mathematical problems, the impact on their attainment has not yet been fully assessed. The school has also taken action to improve attainment in writing as a priority for all pupils.
- Specific support programmes for more-able pupils have resulted in a proportion of pupils attaining the higher Levels 5 and 6 in English and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving or surpassing level 5 was above national number in reading and grammar, punctuation and spelling. The proportion of pupils' attaining level 6 in mathematics and reading and grammar, punctuation and spelling was higher than national levels.
- Good teaching of phonics (the sound letters make) in Reception and Year 1 resulted in a good proportion of pupils reaching the standards expected in the Year 1 phonic screening test in 2012 and 2013.
- Pupils generally show good attitudes to their learning in class and are keen to learn. There are few disruptions in class and this also helps the pupils to learn. Most parents are happy with their children's progress.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Most parents and pupils feel that they are taught well. However, while some good teaching was seen during the inspection, this is not consistent across the school. Where teaching required improvement, the teachers do not show sufficiently high expectations of all pupils to ensure they made at least good progress in lessons.
- Books are marked regularly, but not effectively across the school. As a result, marking does not help pupils enough to understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- The quality and quantity of work seen in books are variable, and too often work is untidy and poorly presented. The progress seen in pupils' books is also inconsistent across the school. Some younger pupils are unclear about what the symbols used in marking mean, and therefore cannot effectively use them to improve their next piece of work. Pupils do not have good opportunities to use their writing skills in other subject areas.
- While targets are set for all pupils in English and mathematics, many pupils were unclear about what they are and how they could be used to improve their work.
- The procedures to track pupils' progress and attainment are established and now involve all teachers, subject leaders and senior managers. In some instances it is not possible for senior leaders and teachers to assess the impact of teaching and additional support on pupils' attainment due to the way information and data are presented.
- Senior leaders and subject leaders support all teachers in ensuring consistency and accuracy in their assessments of pupils' attainment and progress. This has been particularly useful in writing, where teachers were sometimes judging standards to be higher than they actually were.
- Strengths in teaching include the very positive relationships between teachers and their pupils. Where teaching is good, the range of activities sustains pupils' interest and their positive attitude to learning. The teaching of phonics is well organised, enabling pupils to work in groups matched to their abilities. In Year 6 the introduction of grouping boys and girls separately is having a positive impact on girls' confidence in tackling mathematical problems.
- The most consistently good teaching is in Reception and Year 6. In Reception the children are offered a wide range of play and learning opportunities both inside and outside. They were keen to learn, particularly when making outfits for toys in a junk modelling activity. They showed confidence in planning the outfit and using the wide range of resources available.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils' learning. They encourage pupils to develop the ability to learn without constant adult support, and ask questions skilfully to deepen pupils' understanding and learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most parents and staff believe that the school manages behaviour well and that pupils are safe in the school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe in school and the older pupils clearly understood the need for safety when using the internet. This is reinforced by rigorous standards, for example those being set on the recently established school blog.

- Pupils are proud of their school and enthusiastic about the staff and the school. They are polite to visitors, staff and other pupils. They enjoy school, settle quickly and show good attitudes to learning. They are keen to share their work with adults and talk enthusiastically about different aspects of the school, in particular the music activities.
- There are clear sets of sanctions and rewards for behaviour, which are reinforced by all staff across the school. As a result there are few disruptions due to poor behaviour in lessons.
- Parents and pupils feel that bullying is rare and when it occurs, the school deals with it rapidly and effectively.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils attend school regularly and punctually. The school rewards good attendance and rigorously follows up any absence.
- The successful breakfast club gives pupils who attend a nutritious start to the day and ensures their readiness for learning.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Despite regular monitoring of teaching and learning by senior management, the quality of teaching is still not yet consistently good, and attainment for some groups of pupils is below national standards. The observations of teaching carried out by senior staff have not taken enough account of the progress and attainment shown in pupils' books to ensure that teaching was at least good. This has resulted in the observations not giving an accurate enough picture of the overall quality of teaching over time.
- The work set in in Year 1 is not at the right level of difficulty for some pupils. Some are still working below national expectations and therefore not ready for Key Stage 1 work.
- While assessment data are extensive, they are not presented in a way that ensures staff can access information on the impact of any additional support on the attainment of groups of pupils easily and rapidly. Occasionally, there is a lack of rigour in fully assessing the impact of support on pupils' progress, for example the impact made on reading for pupils through the use of the recently bought tablet computers.
- Assessment procedures are well established, and the school works with a local cluster group and the local authority to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the judgements on pupils' attainment and progress.
- The local authority supports and monitors the school's performance through its school improvement service. The headteacher has led the 'Going for Good' cluster group. The school is a lead for religious education in the local authority.
- The school's evaluation and improvement plans are rigorously maintained and contain a high level of detailed information, which the headteacher and senior management team use to monitor the school's performance and introduce new developments to improve the attainment of pupils.
- All staff are given regular appraisals of the quality of their work, and their training needs are clearly identified. All the teaching staff are set clear targets that are suitably linked to both the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils.

- Subject leaders are clear about their roles and regularly monitor teaching and learning across the school. They have rightly identified that the quality of teaching, particularly in English and mathematics, is variable across the school, which is often a reflection of the teacher's knowledge of the subject. Training is offered to all teachers, but the impact of this is not yet being seen in the work in pupils' books.
- Pupils who have special educational needs are supported well, and the special needs leader closely monitors the impact of the help and guidance provided for this group.
- The school successfully supports student teachers in their final year of training. It has employed several of these students once they have qualified.
- The curriculum is rich and varied. Pupils do particularly well in the performing arts, and regularly and successfully take part in local and national competitions for choir and orchestra. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also particularly strong. The school is equally welcoming to all religions and beliefs, and this is demonstrated in assembly and the wider curriculum.
- The school is using the pupil premium funding to provide specialist small group teaching, training for staff, and resources to support all eligible pupils. It is also used to ensure these pupils can access the wider curriculum and clubs. As a result these pupils make nationally expected progress across Key Stage 2, but the gap in attainment between them and their classmates is not yet closing fast enough.
- The school is using the school sports funding to provide a range of sports activities led by Southend United Sports Association for Year 2 to Year 6. There has also been training for staff and the school is now offering a wider range of sports clubs for pupils to attend. The impact has been a larger number of pupils from all groups and year groups attending these clubs. The school is particularly proud of the girls' football team, which is now entering a local league.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well established and involved in the leadership of the school. Governors understand their role in holding leaders to account for the school's performance, and the use of national and school data to do this. There is clear evidence of them challenging leaders, particularly in the curriculum group meeting minutes. They regularly visit the school to observe teaching and look at books with the senior staff in order to keep abreast with the quality of teaching and learning, although there is less evidence of them fully understanding of the progress that should be seen in books to support any judgements of good or better teaching. They have a good understanding of behaviour and safety across the school. They are involved in the headteacher's performance management and ensure that the performance of all teachers is helping to improve the outcomes for pupils. Governors know how the pupil premium funds are spent, and the impact this has had on progress of this group of pupils. All governors have attended a range of training, including safeguarding and safer recruitment, so are aware of their statutory duties and that they are being 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

Unique reference number	115145
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	430791

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	446
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Celia Tyler
Headteacher	Frances E Neil
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2012
Telephone number	01702 354012
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