

Brimscombe Church of England VA Primary School

Brimscombe Hill, Brimscombe, Stroud, GL5 2QR

Inspection dates 23–24 January 2014

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		Require improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' achievement over time has not been good, especially in mathematics and writing, where attainment has fallen at the end of Year 6.
- There has not been enough good and outstanding teaching over time to make sure that all pupils do as well as they should.
- Expectations of pupils' writing are not high enough. Pupils do not develop the skills of punctuation and grammar they need to become effective and fluent writers.
- Marking does not let pupils know how they can improve their work, especially in mathematics.
- Information about how well pupils are doing has not been used well enough to enable teachers to set work for pupils at the right level of difficulty.
- Pupils do not show enough pride in their work and teachers do not insist on the highest standards of presentation or handwriting.
- In the past, leaders, including governors, have not responded quickly enough to falling standards. They have not taken steps to make sure that pupils achieve well over time.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, staff and governors know what needs to improve. As a result, achievement in the school is starting to improve.
- The quality of teaching is improving because the recently introduced tracking system is giving leaders and teachers the information they need about pupils' achievement.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop a love of reading and they do well in this subject.
- Teaching assistants are skilled and they make a difference to the achievement of the pupils they support.
- The school is a very safe place in which to learn and supportive of all families, including those going through challenging times.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in eight lessons and parts of lessons, some of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other leaders in school, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, parents, and pupils.
- The inspector took account of 35 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as 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, safeguarding procedures and examples of the targets teachers are given as part of their performance management, were examined.
- The inspector analysed 11 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Jeanne Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Brimscombe Church of England VA Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school has a pre-school playgroup, Jellybeans, which is managed by the governing body.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding (those eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those with a parent or carer in the armed forces) is lower than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good in order to raise standards, particularly in mathematics and writing, by ensuring that teachers:
 - make better use of the information that is collected about pupils' achievement to plan work which is hard enough for all groups of pupils' different abilities
 - provide pupils with guidance about how they can improve their work, when they mark books
 - give pupils opportunities to put the advice provided to them in marked work into practice.
 - raise expectations of pupils' writing and enable pupils to develop the punctuation and spelling skills they need to become better writers,
- Further develop the skills of middle leaders so that they can play a leading role in driving improvements in teaching and learning and raising pupils' achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because pupils have not made good enough progress in mathematics and writing in Key Stage 2 over the last three years.
- Pupils do not always show that they have the necessary range of skills in punctuation, spelling and grammar to become fluent and effective writers. Pupils' handwriting skills sometimes hold them back and they are not always encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work.
- While there are small numbers of pupils in each year group and this means that there can be wide variations in the percentages of pupils reaching each level, comparisons with similar schools indicate that achievement over time is not good enough for some pupils.
- Pupils' achievement in reading by the end of Key Stage 2 is much better. In 2013, all the pupils reached the expected level of attainment in reading at the end of Year 6, and some did better. Although there was a dip in reading in Key Stage 1 in 2013, information provided by the school indicates that this situation has improved and pupils currently in Year 2 are attaining at higher levels.
- The pre-school playgroup, Jellybeans, supports children's early learning effectively. The experiences children have help them to develop well, particularly in their communication and social skills, though some of them start in Reception with skill levels slightly below those typically found for their age. During their first year in school, children make broadly typical progress and about half of them move into Year 1 with the appropriate range of skills and understanding for their age.
- During Key Stage 1, pupils continue to make expected rates of progress. At the end of Year 2 their standards are broadly in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school has recently introduced a new system for tracking pupils' progress which is helping leaders and teachers to check how well pupils are doing. Information collected this academic year indicates that progress is accelerating in both key stages and a high percentage of pupils are on track to make and exceed expected progress. The school has set challenging targets for pupils so that standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 will be higher than last year.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are given very precise help with their learning, both in lessons and when working alone or in small groups with a teaching assistant. As a result, they make good progress. The very small numbers of pupils and the wide range of needs that these pupils have make comparisons about their attainment with national averages inappropriate, but the school can point to individual cases where pupils have made exceptional gains in their learning from their low starting points.
- The achievement of pupils supported through the pupil premium has lagged behind that of their peers. The school's new tracking system has helped it to check on how well these pupils are doing and this has enabled teachers to make sure that the help these pupils get is exactly what they need. As a result, they are now making better progress than their peers, which is helping them to catch up. There are too few pupils to make meaningful comparisons about their attainment.
- The most able pupils achieve relatively well and many of them make good progress during Key Stage 2, particularly in reading. As a result, they maintain their high standards of attainment and transfer to secondary school with the skills they need for the next stage of their education.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time has been too variable. As a result, pupils have not been able to learn consistently well during their time in school, particularly in mathematics.
- In some lessons, some groups of pupils do not make good enough progress because the work is either too easy or too difficult. This is because information about pupils' achievement is not always used to make sure that the work that teachers set always gives the right level of

challenge.

- Although teachers' marking of pupils' writing often includes comments to tell pupils what they have done well and what needs to improve, and time is sometimes given for pupils to put the advice into practice, both these features are not consistently found in mathematics.
- The presentation of pupils' work is too variable. Teachers do not always insist on neat handwriting and they sometimes accept work which is untidily presented.
- Pupils' writing is also held back because not enough emphasis is placed on the development of pupils' understanding of punctuation and grammar, and how this can help them to become better writers.
- Teachers usually share with pupils what they are going to learn in the lesson and what they need to do to be successful, which helps them to know how well they have done at the end of the lesson. The older pupils are used to commenting on their learning so that teachers know how confident pupils are with the new learning.
- Pupils enjoy their work because teachers do their best to make lessons interesting and relevant. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, responded enthusiastically when asked to write newspaper reports stimulated by their Tudor topic. As a result of their excitement in their learning, they created inventive headlines, such as 'Henry VIII on a diet' and 'Queen conks out!'
- Teaching assistants provide good support so that the pupils they work with, whatever their ability, learn well. They understand how to help them to improve by asking just the right questions, then standing back and letting the pupils learn, so that they do not become dependent on help.
- Reading is taught well and pupils say that they are helped to develop a love of books. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 share their enthusiasm at Reading Club on Friday lunchtimes when they eat their lunch together with a teaching assistant and discuss the books they have chosen to read during the previous week.
- Teachers have a strong desire to do their best for pupils and the quality of teaching is improving. Teachers have good opportunities to learn from each other and from examples of good teaching in other schools.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well around the school and they show high levels of care and respect for each other because that is how the adults treat them. They are proud of their school and they like the opportunities they have to be 'Young Leaders' and take on responsibility for looking after the school and each other.
- Pupils are generally keen to learn and have good attitudes to learning. The few pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour are supported very well, both in school and through the way in which the school works with parents who are going through challenging times. The number of serious incidents is exceptionally low and there has only been one fixed term exclusion in the last three years. This shows that the school's systems are working well.
- Pupils play well together at playtimes and lunchtimes. Pupils have set places at lunch so that those who bring lunch from home and those who have lunches provided by the school eat together. The school takes great care to group the pupils on each table across the age range and with a balance of boys and girls so that they learn to get along with a variety of their peers.
- Pupils are taught about bullying, including name calling and cyber-bullying. They say that there is sometimes play which is a bit rough, but there is almost no real bullying. They say that if it happens, an adult would help sort it out because the adults are very caring.
- Attendance is high because pupils enjoy coming to school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Staff, parents and pupils all agree that the school is a very safe place in which to learn. The site is very secure and the school's system for welcoming visitors means that appropriate checks are carried out on visitors

to the site.

- The school has very effective procedures for checking on the safety of pupils, and staff all receive the training they need to ensure pupils' welfare and safety.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe in situations that might arise in school and in the wider community. They know about internet safety and the regular visit from the Life Bus means that they learn about 'stranger danger' as well as about medicinal drugs and how to use these safely and about other drugs which they must avoid.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Over time, leaders, including governors, have not been vigilant enough in ensuring that all pupils have achieved well. Less attention than necessary has been given to checking on the progress and attainment of pupils, with timely actions taken to reverse the downward trends.
- New appointments have been made to the leadership team and although training has been put in place to make sure that the new leaders are helped to develop the qualities and skills they need, actions taken have not been in place long enough to raise the quality of teaching and achievement at the school to good.
- The new leaders understand what the data are telling them about what is going well and what needs to improve. However, they need time to gather more information about their subjects, such as the quality of teaching and the quality of work in pupils' books, so that they can drive forward the changes necessary to bring about further improvements.
- The changes that have been put in place in mathematics since the beginning of this academic year are starting to make a difference, as seen in the improving rates of progress and higher standards that pupils are achieving. This strengthening picture indicates that there is capacity for further improvement.
- The headteacher and governors are now making appropriate use of the information about pupils' achievement to hold staff to account for pupils' achievement. The targets that teachers are given as part of their performance management are appropriately challenging.
- The school's plans for improvement focus on the right things because the headteacher and governors know what needs to improve, and the quality of teaching is improving as a result of the higher expectations that are being put in place.
- The school's vision is at the centre of everything the school does. The opportunities that the pupils have to develop into creative, caring young people who respect and care for each other contribute strongly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The wide range of subjects pupils are taught give them good opportunities to learn about history, geography, music and art, and there is a strong link with a school in The Gambia.
- Good use has been made of the additional funding received by the school for the improvement of physical education (PE) and sport. A coach has been employed to plan and teach alongside teachers to ensure that high quality provision in PE across the school can continue into the future. A wider range of sports activities is now available and this has resulted in higher levels of participation in lunchtime clubs and after-school clubs. The school has been able to participate in more inter-school competitions and pupils have extended their interests outside school by joining external clubs.
- The school values every child and the improving rates of progress for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those eligible for support through the pupil premium show that the school is promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring that there is no discrimination.
- The local authority has detailed knowledge of the effectiveness of the school and has provided good support which has helped the school to improve.
- The school's systems for the safeguarding of pupils meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governance of the school has been through a period of change. Many governors are new to the school but they bring a wealth of talent and experience which they are using well to

support the headteacher in bringing about the improvements needed. They have undertaken training to enhance their skills further and they have restructured their committees to provide higher levels of challenge. They monitor spending carefully, including the use of the pupil premium funding for both academic guidance and social reasons, and they know it is helping to close the gap. They make sure that only the best teachers are rewarded by progression through the pay scales. They know about the quality of teaching and how well the school is doing compared with similar schools from data and reports from the headteacher and from their conversations with teachers. They are aware of the weaknesses of the past and they are determined that the school will become outstanding as soon as possible.

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	115690
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	431850

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	98
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Russell
Headteacher	Karen Riordan
Date of previous school inspection	31 January–1 February 2011
Telephone number	01453 882474
Email address	admin@brimscombe.gloucs.sch.uk

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