

Rusthall St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

High Street, Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells, TN4 8RZ

Inspection dates

12–13 March 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		Require improvement	3
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

- Too few pupils make good progress because some teachers expect too little of them and do not ensure that pupils act on the advice given to improve their work.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 declined over the previous three years and is now below the national average.
- Achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 is not as high as it should be because some pupils make insufficient progress, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium attain less well than other pupils, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- The organisation of the classroom and teaching in the Reception class are not enabling children to make as much progress as they have in previous years.
- Before the arrival of the new headteacher, the school did not deal effectively with pupils' misbehaviour. Despite recent improvements, a few parents and carers still express some concerns.
- The governing body has not checked that senior leaders have put measures in place to secure rapid improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher is taking a strong, dynamic lead to drive rapid improvement in teaching and behaviour. She now provides governors with the information they need to challenge the school well.
- The curriculum and ethos of the school promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- The school values its place at the heart of the community and works hard to maintain it.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 13 lessons and observed 13 teachers, including some joint observations with the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors made shorter visits to some classes, talked to pupils about reading and listened to some pupils read. They also visited a whole school assembly.
- Meetings were held with the vice-chair of the governing body and a parent governor, a range of staff, including senior and middle leaders, and two groups of pupils. A telephone conversation took place with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and checked pupils' work, progress information, evaluation and development documents, safeguarding information, records relating to attendance and exclusions and governing body minutes.
- Inspectors took account of 50 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), 23 questionnaires completed by staff during the inspection and a small number of letters submitted by parents and carers, current and former pupils. Other parental views were sought from a small number of other parents and carers collecting their children at the start and end of the school day.

Inspection team

Steven Smith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Tomkins

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Rusthall St Paul's is an average-sized primary school.
- The new headteacher has been in post since January 2014.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for looked after children, pupils eligible for free school meals and some other groups. In this school it applies to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action is well below average, while the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The governing body is responsible for the breakfast club organised for pupils in the school.
- The school meets the current floor standard, which sets the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better to accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in reading and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring all teachers expect the very best from every pupil, including the most able, in terms of both work rate and the thought put into their work
 - ensuring every pupil responds to the helpful marking provided by most teachers
 - ensuring that teaching in the Reception class provides children with sufficient opportunities to read and develop their language skills.
- Improve the behaviour and safety of pupils by:
 - applying the school's behaviour policy consistently so that any poor behaviour is tackled swiftly and effectively and does not hinder learning
 - ensuring that the classroom organisation in Reception enables children to be supervised effectively at all times
 - continuing to improve the attendance of those pupils who find it more difficult to come to school regularly.
- Strengthen recent improvements to leadership and management by:
 - ensuring the governors always have the information they need in order to challenge the school to improve further
 - ensuring that senior leaders and governors make sure that additional pupil premium funding is used effectively.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils do not make consistently good progress in all subjects. Not all staff expect the most from pupils to boost their learning, particularly the more able. The proportion of pupils making the progress expected of them in writing is above average but is below average in both reading and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils who are making more progress than expected, however, is above the national average in mathematics and in reading.
- When children join the Reception class their skills are, typically, just below those expected for their age. They make sound progress and achieve the expected level of development by the time they start in Year 1, and some exceed this. School leaders are aware that current provision is less effective and that children's progress is now slowing down.
- In 2013 attainment was below average but school information shows that it is getting better as pupils are making more rapid progress, especially in Key Stage 2.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve less well than similar pupils nationally in reading and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. School progress information, which has been carefully checked for accuracy, shows that the support provided to current pupils is enabling them to make faster progress and catch up with their peers, so that this gap in performance is getting smaller.
- In the Year 1 phonics (knowing letters and the sounds they make) screening check in 2013 the overall proportion achieving the expected standard was above that found nationally, although girls did much better than boys.
- Pupils enjoy reading and are able to work out unfamiliar words using their phonic knowledge and skills. Some pupils say that they do not get many chances to practise their reading at home.
- Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium attain less well than others in the school. In the 2013 national tests they were typically two years behind other pupils in mathematics and reading and a year behind them in writing. School progress information shows that support provided to current pupils is enabling them to catch up and, in some cases, overtake their peers, so that gaps in performance are now much narrower.
- The achievement of more able pupils requires improvement as the work they are set is not always challenging enough to ensure they make as much progress as they can.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, although it is improving, it has not consistently been good across all subjects and year groups.
- Since the appointment of the new headteacher, teaching is regularly checked and staff are supported to develop their teaching skills further. As a result, school records and inspectors' observations show that it is improving. School information shows that pupils are now making more rapid progress, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Younger pupils do not always learn as well as older pupils because teachers do not always engage their interest; they get bored and start to chat. Sometimes the work is too easy and the more able are not challenged with demanding activities. Teachers do not always act swiftly enough to re-engage pupils and learning time is wasted. In Reception, the classroom is not organised to support children's progress effectively.
- When teaching is most effective, teachers use information about pupils' progress and attainment to plan activities that stretch the more able and motivate those who learn at a slower rate. Consequently, pupils are keen to learn and very proud of their work. One boy sought out the inspectors to read to them an impressive poem he had written in his English lesson.
- Teachers make good use of questioning to check pupils' understanding and put right any

misunderstandings.

- Many teachers mark books regularly and provide helpful advice to pupils to help them improve their work. Pupils are given time to act on the advice and the progress they make can be seen in their books. This is not always the case, however, and often teachers fail to ensure that all pupils follow up their guidance.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive extra help, usually from teaching assistants, who support them sensitively and make sure they are interested and engaged. As a result, they are now making better progress than they did in previous years.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, are polite and friendly, and have positive attitudes to school and learning. Nevertheless, when younger pupils, in particular, are not interested in the work set, they lose interest and chatter to each other. This disrupts their own and other pupils' learning.
- Attendance is average and shows little sign of improvement.
- Most parents and carers feel that pupils are well behaved, although a small number raised concerns about behaviour and some also expressed concerns that bullying is not always dealt with effectively.
- Most pupils are proud of their school and say that 'teachers inspire you to work really hard.' The school council values the opportunities pupils have to take on additional responsibilities, particularly in Year 6, such as being a hall monitor or house captain. Pupils agree that their teachers are kind and they would know who to turn to should they need any kind of help but expressed concern that their learning is sometimes interrupted by other pupils in their class.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement.
- Pupils and most parents and carers feel that the school keeps them safe. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including road safety and when they go online. Nevertheless, on the rare occasions when pupils are not adequately supervised by staff, they engage in unsafe activity that is left unchallenged; for example, inspectors saw Reception class children running in the hall while carrying physical education equipment.
- Pupils know about the different types of bullying and recognise that it has been an issue in the past. Pupils report that, since the appointment of the new headteacher, things have improved considerably but there is more to do; inspectors agree. School records show a decline in the number of exclusions.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because neither teaching nor achievement are good. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, leaders and managers have acted swiftly and decisively to address the school's weak performance.
- The school is now analysing pupils' current progress and achievement clearly to plan their learning and has acted quickly to address the lack of impact of the pupil premium on eligible pupils' achievement.
- Subject leadership is now improving because these leaders are well supported by the new headteacher, who checks that they perform their roles well. They have the appropriate skills and a good overview of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. They are now playing a key role in bringing about improvements in teaching and learning.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced with an appropriate focus on numeracy, literacy and speaking. It meets the needs of the pupils and the topics studied, such as the Egyptians, appeal to them. They commented to inspectors about how much they enjoyed their work. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the curriculum and in

assemblies.

- Pupils also value the additional opportunities the school provides for them, such as the wide range of clubs and trips, for example to Hindleap Warren.
- The school has clear plans to use the additional sports funding to increase participation in sport by employing sports coaches from the local school sports partnership. They work alongside teachers, demonstrating effective practice and coaching them to increase their skills in physical education so they, in turn, can develop pupils' skills more effectively.
- There is a focus on ensuring that all pupils have the same chances to succeed throughout the school and pupils from all backgrounds get on well together. Discrimination is very rare and tackled effectively. However, variations in teaching mean that pupils do not all have the same opportunity to make good progress.
- The local authority has correctly evaluated that the school needs improvement and has provided appropriate challenge and support, which is valued by the headteacher.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors did not act early enough to redress the decline in pupils' achievement. This is because they did not have a good understanding of information about the school's performance and did not check if the pupil premium was helping pupils to make more rapid progress. They took great care selecting the new headteacher, and are pleased at the positive impact she has had on the school as a whole and on their work as governors. Governors now have access to the information they need about the school's performance, which they understand better and use to hold the school to account more effectively than in the past. They have started to identify their own skills and strengths and align them to the aspects of the school improvement plan they are monitoring. They now keep accurate records of training undertaken and have decided that there is more to do to strengthen their work, having already arranged a review of governance. They are aware of the quality of teaching throughout the school and need to take action to strengthen the procedures for checking on teachers' performance and how it relates to salary progression. Governors have agreed how the school spends pupil premium funding and now use school information to ensure it is helping pupils in the way they expect. Governors have set a balanced budget which they monitor rigorously and have ensured that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

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	135164
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	431030

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	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graeme Anderson
Headteacher	Caroline Powell
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 June 2012
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