

St Margaret's Church of England (VA) Primary School

Whiteway Lane, Rottingdean, Brighton BN2 7HB

Inspection dates

13–14 March 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The achievement of pupils requires improvement. While checks on pupils' achievement show that some have made the progress expected for their age (and some have made better-than-expected progress) in the past year, too few have yet made sufficient progress. This is particularly true for those pupils in Years 3 and 4 who are not enabled to reach better levels of attainment in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.
- While rapidly improving, not enough teaching is good over time.
- Some teaching does not focus clearly enough on what pupils are to learn but rather on keeping them occupied.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use their improving calculation skills to solve problems or apply and practise their number skills in a range of different contexts.
- Not all teachers use marking and feedback well enough to maximise pupils' progress.
- The information teachers collect about how well pupils are doing is not used effectively enough to set work that challenges all pupils of different abilities, particularly the most able.

The school has the following strengths

- The very determined headteacher has set high expectations and, working in strong partnership with governors and staff, he has implemented rigorous plans for improvement. As a result the quality of teaching is now improving rapidly and attainment rising.
- Strengths of teaching in Years 5 and 6 are helping pupils to make better progress.
- Children in the Reception class get off to a good start because of good teaching and high levels of care and support.
- Pupils eligible for free school meals and those with additional needs make faster progress than their classmates.
- Pupils behave well; they say they feel very happy, safe and well cared for in their school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons taught by eight teachers. Almost all of these were jointly observed with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made a number of shorter visits to lessons and the provision for pupils learning outside the classroom, as well as some supported within classes, to focus on specific aspects.
- Discussions were held with the Vice-Chair and other members of the governing body, senior and middle leaders, staff, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, assessment, monitoring and evaluation information and the school's improvement plan. Work in pupils' books was jointly examined with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, and inspectors heard individual pupils read from different year groups.
- Inspectors took account of the 97 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and those of the 20 members of staff who responded to the staff questionnaire. Ten parents and carers were also spoken to when bringing their children to school.

Inspection team

Wendy Forbes, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Keith Homewood

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Margaret's is smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. Fewer pupils than average speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is below average. The percentage of pupils with more complex needs identified and supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the additional funding for pupils in local authority care, those from service families and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. In this school there are only pupils from the last category.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- No pupils are educated in alternative provision away from the school site.
- There have been a number of staff changes, long-term planned staff absence covered by temporary teaching staff and a range of new appointments since the last inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher and a mathematics leader in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that all teachers check pupils' attainment and progress accurately and use this information to set work at the right level to challenge all pupils, especially for the most able
 - improving teachers' skills of judging when pupils are ready to move on to more challenging work, especially in mathematics
 - providing more opportunities in mathematics for pupils to use their calculation skills to solve problems
 - planning activities that focus on the learning expected for different groups of pupils.
- Increase the rate of progress and raise pupils' attainment in mathematics by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils of different abilities can achieve
 - ensuring teachers use marking and feedback to pupils well enough to maximize their progress
 - providing opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in a range of subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because too few pupils make better-than-expected progress, particularly in mathematics, so that they are enabled to reach and exceed average levels of attainment for their age by the time they leave school.
- Since September 2013, school evidence shows that pupils' progress has improved. Rapidly improving teaching is making sure pupils are more effectively supported to make better progress. Any gaps between standards expected for their age and those being reached by pupils currently in school are closing. The proportion of pupils exceeding expected progress for their age is increasing in reading and writing. In mathematics, less progress has been made where standards in some classes remain below those expected.
- The most able pupils do not always receive work that is challenging enough or expectations from teachers that are high enough for them to make progress that exceeds the expected rate. Current information from checks on pupils' work suggests this is improving because the headteacher has raised expectations for all pupils.
- An effective whole-school focus on strengthening the teaching of writing and reading has quickened pupils' progress. As a result, pupils have shown at least broadly average and sometimes higher performance in the phonics screening checks at the end of Year 1 over the past two years. The improvement in writing skills and more recent developments in the way subjects are taught have accelerated pupils' progress in writing.
- Pupils read confidently and fluently. Early reading skills are taught effectively, so pupils have a good base from which to develop early writing skills. Small-group sessions provide additional support for those who need it.
- Children enter Reception with skills generally in line with the expected level of development for their age. They make good progress in Reception so skills are at least in line with and often better than expected levels when they join Year 1.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported in lessons. They benefit significantly from additional specialist teaching and support. National and school performance data show most make good progress compared to others. The gap is closing between themselves and other pupils in the school and nationally by Year 6.
- The smaller-than-average number of pupils eligible for additional funding achieve well. Compared to other pupils their attainment is above average in the school. These pupils benefit from the well-planned individual and group support which has helped accelerate their progress and ensure they have caught up with, and in some cases achieve better than, their classmates.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- While teaching is improving rapidly, it requires further improvement because some teachers do not plan lessons well enough to make sure pupils make good progress. Teaching does not always provide sufficient challenge for most able pupils; expectations of what some can achieve are limited. Pupils do not always understand what they have to do or how to produce work of a high-enough standard.
- In mathematics, the pace of learning is sometimes slowed because pupils do not have enough opportunities to use the calculation skills they are learning to solve problems.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan activities that build carefully on what pupils know and can do and develop and extend their learning. Pupils are clear about what is expected of them and respond positively to opportunities that allow them to decide with their teacher which level is right for them to work at.
- The most effective teaching, as seen in Year 6, helped pupils to explore ways of solving a problem using 'dots and boxes'. An enthusiastic teacher built effectively on pupils' prior knowledge to extend pupils' understanding of shape and patterns while further challenging them

to solve tricky questions, such as the area of a compound shape.

- Support for pupils with additional needs is well targeted to help overcome any barriers to learning, by improving their reading, writing and mathematics skills. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs progress well because needs are appropriately targeted for extra help.
- The quality of feedback and discussion about learning shared openly by pupils and their teachers is strengthening across the school. Where teaching is effective, pupils evaluate their own progress and record how well they think they have done. Teachers evaluate this comment and respond by adding challenge or identifying extra support. Pupils say this is increasing their confidence and helping them improve their work. However, this quality is not yet evident in all classes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are considerate and well mannered. Pupils' attitudes to learning are extremely positive; they are keen to learn, ask questions and strive to do better in their work, and make increasingly good progress.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because occasionally a few pupils become distracted when activities are not pitched at the right level to challenge them and keep their attention. However, pupils themselves confirm lessons are hardly ever disrupted by poor behaviour.
- Teachers and teaching assistants manage behaviour well, ensuring a calm atmosphere for learning. However, when occasionally explanations are too complicated, or instructions are not clear, some pupils lose interest and their progress slows.
- The behaviour of children and learning are good in the Reception class. They share resources sensibly and concentrate well on their tasks. Routines are well established and all respond quickly to teachers' or other adults' instructions.
- Older pupils willingly take on responsibilities to help the smooth running of the school. They enjoy their roles as lunchtime monitors, as 'Bully busters' and as members of the school council.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and cared for well. Those parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire overwhelmingly agree.
- Pupils believe that bullying is rare; they think they are treated fairly and equally in lessons and at play. Pupils are taught well to identify potential dangers to their well-being, for example, those associated with roads and the use of the internet.
- Attendance has risen and is now broadly average. The headteacher is ensuring that everyone, including parents, understands the need for good attendance, and is taking decisive action where it is not.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership, including governance, is ambitious and determined to improve the school. Expectations are high and reflected in further improvements in teaching, through, for example, the setting of individual targets for pupils to know and understand how to improve their work, raising their expectations of what can be achieved. As a result, attainment is rising and there are improving rates of progress in most subjects.
- A significant feature of the headteacher's work has been to re-ignite pupils' enthusiasm for learning through developments in the 'creative curriculum' which take good account of pupils' interests and talents, especially boys, whose writing attainment has risen as a result. Whole-school themes, such as 'Ice Worlds', make effective links across a wide range of subjects. As one pupil said, 'It's really exciting, climbing into our tent, imagining what it's like to be an explorer!'
- The new primary sports funding is used well to strengthen the already good quality and breadth of physical education and sport provision, further developing teachers' skills through specialist support to enhance gymnastic and dance provision.

- Staff performance is managed well. School records of teaching show clear links between teachers' performance, pupils' achievement and salary progression. Senior leaders and governors are single-minded in their determination to eradicate any weaker teaching.
- Subject leadership is good in English. The impact is seen in the effective development of writing. Achieving improvements in mathematics are a priority for the school this year. The recently appointed mathematics leader has a clear vision and ambition for improvement, which has already gone some way to addressing relative weaknesses in mathematics teaching and achievement. However, as yet, the impact of work in this area has yet to be seen.
- Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, ensuring provision helps children make good progress and prepare well for Year 1.
- Teachers promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development well by encouraging curiosity about the world and arranging visits to extend pupils' knowledge. Social and moral development is fostered well through opportunities to work together harmoniously, including in school performances, assemblies and sporting competitions.
- The local authority provides effective support for the school in helping to improve teaching and raise achievement.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school in their appreciation of the efforts of the newly appointed headteacher to further improve the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas of planned improvement, including information on its performance. It ensures safeguarding requirements are met and pupils are safe. Governors take part in a wide range of training to maintain their effectiveness. They are fully involved in driving improvement, for example, in the skilful management of finances to improve achievement, especially of those in receipt of the additional funding. They ensure that the school gets good value from spending decisions by comparing data on the progress of these pupils with that of others in the school. Governors have an informed view of the quality of teaching. They know how school leaders set targets for teachers, check on how well staff are improving their expertise, reward good teaching and tackle any underperformance.

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	114537
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	431394

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Church of England (Aided)
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lindsey Delow
Headteacher	Simon Hateley
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2009
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