

St Columba Church of England Primary Academy

Tewkesbury Avenue, Fareham, Hants, PO15 6LL

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress, particularly in writing and mathematics and in Years 4 to 6.
- Pupils do not get enough opportunities to practise writing across a range of subjects. Science is not taught in sufficient depth.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have not been achieving sufficiently well.
- Teachers in Years 4 to 6 do not always have high enough expectations of what their pupils, especially the more able, can achieve.
- Pupils' written work is not produced to a consistently high standard.
- Teachers' marking is not consistently effective in helping pupils to improve their work.
- The attitudes to learning of older pupils are not consistently positive, particularly when teaching does not stimulate them.
- Although they involve only a few pupils, exclusions remain too high.
- Not all middle leaders have had sufficient impact on pupils' achievement.
- There has been insufficient urgency, until recently, in taking action to improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2. As a result, the pace of improvement has been relatively slow.

The school has the following strengths

- Children achieve well in Reception. Provision and outcomes have improved.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 3 are now making much better progress. Good support is helping pupils to improve their reading skills.
- Gaps in attainment between pupils supported by additional funding and other pupils are reducing.
- Higher expectations and better procedures have helped to improve the behaviour and attendance of most pupils. Pupils feel safe and secure.
- Senior leaders have secured improvements in provision for younger pupils. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and hold senior leaders increasingly to account.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 15 lessons, eight of which were seen together with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, the school's senior and subject leaders, and a representative of the Academy Trust.
- Inspectors took account of the 23 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were 17 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also looked at the school's own survey of parents' views, taken in May 2013.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documents, including records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings, the headteacher's termly report to the governing body and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the tracking of pupils' progress. They also looked closely at pupils' written work for the current school year and listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Fiona Robinson

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Columba Church of England Primary Academy is smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- There is an assessment resourced provision for ten pupils aged four to seven. Pupils' individual needs are assessed and suitable placements identified to meet their long-term education needs.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be entitled to free school meals or those looked after by the local authority, is above average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school was previously known as Oak Meadow Church of England Primary School. It became an academy in September 2012, joining the Portsmouth and Winchester Diocesan Academy Trust. There are three schools in the Academy Trust currently, all of which provide for primary-age pupils.
- When the predecessor school was last inspected, on 29 March 2011, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- There is a children's centre and a pre-school on the school site. These are managed and inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching further, particularly in Years 4 to 6, by ensuring that:
 - teachers across the school show consistently high expectations by setting work that builds on what pupils already know and can do
 - pupils produce a consistently high quality of written work
 - marking gives pupils clear guidance on how to move their learning on, and teachers check to make sure they respond to the advice given.
- Improve achievement, so that pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics and writing, is more consistent and rapid across the school and standards are higher by the end of Year 6, by ensuring that:
 - pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs make more consistently good progress
 - pupils have more opportunities to develop their skills in writing in different subjects
 - pupils experience a greater range of activities through subjects such as science.
- Build on the recent improvements in pupils' behaviour by:
 - closely monitoring pupils' attitudes to learning within lessons
 - ensuring that the proportion of pupil exclusions is further reduced.
- Improve leadership and governance, and accelerate further the pace of change, by ensuring that:
 - actions to improve further the teaching of older pupils are robust and timely
 - the impact of all middle leaders on pupils' achievement is consistently strong.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress varies too much across the school to support good achievement overall. While progress is now more consistent and rapid, and often good, from Reception to Year 3, it remains slower in Years 4 to 6, because of weaker teaching. As a consequence, progress requires further improvement.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs have typically made inconsistent progress. While there have been recent improvements in supporting these pupils, and their current progress is improving, it is not yet consistently good.
- Year 6 pupils supported by pupil premium funding in 2013 were around four terms behind their classmates in mathematics, three terms in writing and almost six terms in reading. Support for eligible pupils has improved recently, so that, across the school, pupils now make progress similar to their peers. The attainment gap for Year 6 pupils has narrowed and is currently around two terms in all subjects.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 was below average in 2013. Attainment has improved in the current year so that standards are now broadly average. Current data indicate that pupils' progress has accelerated in both Year 1 and Year 2.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 was well below average in 2013. However, pupils are making better progress this year, particularly in reading and writing. Although attainment remains below average in writing and mathematics, standards in reading are now closer to average. The school is boosting achievement in mathematics by introducing an intensive mathematics programme.
- Some Year 6 pupils are now working at the highest level (Level 6) in mathematics and reading. Even so, not enough has been done to promote all pupils' skills in writing through different subjects.
- Outcomes at the end of Reception have risen steadily over the last three years. Children start in Reception with skills and understanding that are generally below levels typical for their age. They now make mostly good progress and reach broadly average standards as they enter Year 1. Staff assessments of children's knowledge and skills are thorough.
- The Assessment Resourced Provision provides high-quality care for identified pupils, effectively evaluates their needs and enables them to make good progress, in line with their existing needs.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils attaining the expected standard in the screening check in phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) was below the national average in 2013. More effective teaching of phonics this year is contributing to improved outcomes.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Weaker teaching, particularly in Key Stage 2, has affected learning and progress over time. While teaching is now mostly good from Reception through to Year 3, inconsistencies remain elsewhere, resulting in a legacy of weaker progress for many older pupils. Leaders have acted recently to tackle weak teaching which has adversely affected the progress of pupils in Years 4 to 6.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations so that the level of challenge, especially for older, more able pupils, is not always high enough. The written work of older pupils is not always produced to a high standard.
- The rigour with which teachers check pupils' progress, thus enabling them to give appropriate levels of support, is variable. There is some good practice in marking, particularly in Years 1 and 2, so that pupils know the next steps they need to take to move their learning on. However, this is inconsistently implemented.
- Learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is typically good. The classroom and outdoor environments are spacious and creatively developed. Activities challenge children well and engage their enthusiasm for learning.

- Pupils supported by pupil premium funding benefit from increasingly good adult support. It is now closely aligned to individual needs, identified through the close tracking of pupils' progress.
- Despite some remaining weaknesses, learning is often effective. Pupils were enthusiastically engaged by a mathematics session in Year 2, involving the addition of two-digit numbers within money calculations. Activities were briskly managed and challenging. Some worked well independently, while others received high-quality support from the class teacher and the motivating teaching assistant. Consequently, all groups made good progress.
- Effective teaching of reading skills means that pupils make increasingly rapid progress in reading.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils' attitudes to learning are not consistently good. Older pupils sometimes disengage when teaching does not interest or stimulate them. This leads to some low-level disruption. Until recently, pupils have not always taken sufficient care over their written work. Better teaching in the lower school is contributing to a greater enthusiasm for learning.
- While inappropriate behaviour has declined significantly, the level of exclusions is still relatively high. These are, however, concentrated solely in two year groups, including the current Year 6. Improved behaviour management systems now ensure a consistent response to issues. Parents report few current concerns about behaviour.
- Pupils eagerly undertake responsibilities within class and outdoors, so contributing to the smooth running of the school community. Older pupils enthusiastically lead after-school clubs.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is mostly good. Considerable effort is made to support pupils with specific needs. Pupils say they feel safe, confident that adults will respond quickly if any difficulties arise.
- Pupils have a good appreciation of a range of risks. They recognise that bullying may take many forms. Older pupils are well aware of the dangers relating to cyber-bullying. Bullying is rare, and most pupils are confident that any problems will be addressed by the school.
- Attendance has improved steadily and is now broadly average. The school has a rigorous approach to tackling absences.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leaders and governors effectively promote the school's positive ethos and are committed to improving pupils' achievement. Senior leaders are committed and ambitious for the school. The pace of change has not, however, been sufficiently rapid. While school leaders' actions have, over time, improved the teaching and achievement of younger pupils, they have not yet had a sufficient impact upon the outcomes of older pupils.
- The impact of middle leaders is variable. Some, such as the leader with responsibility for the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, are well established and effective. The impact of the leaders of literacy and mathematics, while developing, is less consistent.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs. Work in literacy and numeracy is given a high priority, because improving teaching and standards in writing and mathematics are key areas for development. However, pupils' writing skills are not yet developed sufficiently through subjects such as history or geography, and science is relatively underdeveloped.
- Despite some remaining weaknesses, school leaders are beginning to take the appropriate action to address residual weaknesses in teaching and achievement. The school is in a more secure position, particularly in relation to behaviour and attendance, and the achievement of younger pupils especially is improving well. Leaders have an accurate overview of the quality of teaching, based on the monitoring of lessons and reviews of pupils' work.
- The school's systems for managing staff performance are now more rigorous. Teachers are set

aspirational targets, underpinned by better training opportunities. Following staff changes, there is now a close link between teachers' performance and their pay rises and promotion.

- The school's view of itself is accurate. Academy development plans identify the correct priorities. The most significant weaknesses are being addressed.
- School leaders are monitoring the impact of pupil premium funding closely. Additional teaching is provided in English and mathematics to help any pupils at risk of falling behind. The primary school sports funding is being used well to train staff and give pupils a wider range of activities. As a result, more pupils are now participating in sports and after-school clubs.
- The support of the Academy Trust had limited impact on pupils' achievement last year. However, more recent input has provided greater challenge, focused on the rapid improvement of pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is promoted well. Cultural development is not as strongly established. Good partnerships with other schools exist but these are not yet sufficiently developed to allow teachers to extend their skills and experience. Links with parents are mostly good.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have responded positively to the challenges facing the academy and recognise that further improvement is needed. They help to ensure clear direction for the academy through their active contribution to self-evaluation and development planning. Records of meetings, particularly in committees, show that they increasingly hold leaders to account for the effectiveness of pupils' education.
- Governors have benefited from focused training on analysing data, and know how pupils' performance compares with that in similar schools nationally. They undertake focused visits and interview pupils. They are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity, tackling discrimination and promoting good relationships. They have a good understanding of the current quality of teaching, ensuring that pay is closely aligned to teachers' effectiveness.
- Governors understand the impact of spending decisions, including the use of pupil premium funding to close gaps in pupils' attainment.
- Governors ensure that all their statutory duties are met, including the procedures relating to safeguarding pupils.

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	138509
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	426383

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pauline Andersen
Headteacher	Jane Hoggarth-Allen
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01329 843226
Fax number	01329 843872
Email address	j.hoggarth@stcolumba.hants.sch.uk

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