

# Totnes St John's Church of England Primary School

Pathfields, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5TZ

## Inspection dates

3–4 July 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Since the previous inspection, governors and senior leaders have transformed the way the school runs and it is improving rapidly.
- Governors have received extra training so they know how to check if the school is getting better. They challenge senior leaders to carry on improving it.
- The school was asked to improve the achievement of more-able pupils after the previous inspection. Now many pupils make good progress to achieve higher standards.
- Pupils' attainment in national tests continues to improve and it is above average.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Teaching has improved and it is now good. Lessons are well organised so pupils make the most of their time learning.
- Pupils learn well because teachers provide them with frequent opportunities to explain their ideas and develop their understanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are respectful of one another and their teachers. Attendance has improved since the previous inspection.
- The school has improved the curriculum and it makes good use of the site to give pupils exciting opportunities to learn in different ways.
- Parents and carers say that the school inspires their children.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do not make similarly rapid progress as other pupils at the school.
- Teachers mark pupils' books carefully but pupils have too few chances to follow up on the advice they receive.
- Not all lessons are planned to help groups of pupils learn at the right level or to build on their skills.
- Leaders do not check the progress of different groups of pupils carefully enough so plans to improve their achievements are not specific enough.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 16 lessons taught by nine teachers. Of these observations, three were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with representatives from the governing body, the headteacher and teachers. The inspectors spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors spoke with groups of pupils and listened to some of them read. They scrutinised a sample of pupils' work in their books.
- There were 24 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and inspectors took account of the views of parents and carers they met at the school.
- The inspectors looked at various documents, including the records of pupils' progress, the school's self-evaluation, development plans, behaviour and attendance records and safeguarding procedures.
- The inspectors took account of 14 questionnaires returned by members of staff.

## Inspection team

Juliet Jaggs, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alan Jones

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Totnes St John's Church of England Primary School is smaller than most other primary schools.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is above average. There are no pupils in the care of the local authority at the school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. Most of these pupils receive support for needs associated with moderate learning and behavioural, social and emotional difficulties.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There is a children's centre on the same site as the school which did not form part of this inspection.
- The school is a member of the South Dartmoor School Sport Partnership.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more of it is outstanding by making sure that:
  - teachers use information from assessments to plan lessons at the right level, that are not too easy for the more able or too difficult for those pupils who need extra help
  - teachers give pupils regular opportunities to learn by following up on the comments they receive when teachers mark their books.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - looking more closely at assessment information about different groups of pupils, especially disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and using this information to plan specific developments to improve their achievement
  - holding teachers to account for using assessment information in their planning so that all pupils make good progress by learning at the right level.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- There has been a rapid improvement in pupils' achievement since the previous inspections. A high proportion of pupils in each year group now make good progress.
- Pupils throughout the school are encouraged to explain how they use their knowledge to solve problems or to justify new ideas. For example, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage suggested that rhyming words are words where the sounds match. These frequent opportunities to think clearly and speak concisely do much to improve pupils' understanding so they retain information well.
- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with a range of skills that are below the levels typically expected of children of a similar age, especially in their communication. They settle quickly into learning routines which help them concentrate and persevere. Many of them make good progress to reach a good level of development and they are well prepared for Year 1.
- At the time of the previous inspection, the school was asked to focus on the progress made by more-able pupils. The school's records show that the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels in most year groups has risen as a result. This is particularly so in Year 2 where the school has worked hard to raise pupils' attainment after a dip in performance last year. There have been sustained improvements in the overall attainment of Year 6 pupils in national tests and it is above average.
- The school has introduced several systems for improving pupils' writing. Pupils frequently practise spelling and grammar in addition to using rich opportunities for planning imaginative prose. Teachers help most pupils combine these elements successfully so they make excellent progress in writing accurately in a variety of styles. For two years running, pupils at the school have published their own book of collected stories with contributions from pupils of all ages. Progress is not at such a high level in mathematics and reading.
- There has been a particular focus on the achievement of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding since the previous inspection. The gap between their attainment and that of their peers is closing although fewer of them achieve the higher levels of attainment. They now make better progress than the average for all pupils nationally, especially in writing.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is more variable than that of their peers because they do not receive consistently effective support. Some adults do too much to help pupils complete tasks so pupils are not learning by making their own decisions. As a result, they lack confidence using their knowledge and they are not remembering mathematical facts well enough or the sounds that letters make to read fluently.
- Most pupils enjoy reading; Year 6 pupils thoughtfully analyse the differences between the first book in a series and the sequel. The majority of Year 1 pupils achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check and the school has increased the proportion of children achieving this standard at their second attempt.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Most of it is now good with some that is outstanding.
- Teachers have clear expectations and well-established routines in their classrooms. This means pupils collaborate effectively when they learn in small groups and they are conscientious during individual tasks. When provided with opportunities to talk with a partner, pupils help one another recall relevant prior knowledge to develop their understanding.
- Learning activities are particularly well thought out in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They encourage children to develop their skills and understanding by exploring.
- Pupils learn to express their ideas well and to be patient as they listen to the contributions of others because teachers manage discussions well. Teachers ask questions skilfully and in ways

that give some pupils the opportunity to extend their knowledge whereas other pupils share any misunderstandings. Teachers take care to follow up these comments and provide individual pupils with the challenge or support necessary to sustain good progress.

- Most teaching assistants support their colleagues well, settling pupils to work and prompting them to recall prior learning. Some are less skilful at providing individual pupils with guidance about next steps and they do too much for them.
- Improvements to the curriculum since the previous inspection mean that teachers are now planning more engaging learning activities. Most of these are introduced well, encouraging more-able pupils to think in various different ways, which promotes good progress. On other occasions, more-able pupils spend time on work that is too easy for them or those who find learning difficult are not sure how to begin because planned tasks do not reflect pupils' different levels of attainment accurately enough.
- Work in pupils' books shows that some of their learning is repetitive and they are not always given enough opportunities to build on their skills during lessons. This prevents some of them from making rapid progress.
- Teachers mark pupils' books carefully, clearly showing pupils where learning has been good and how it could be improved. Pupils appreciate this level of detail but they say they take more notice when their teacher talks to them individually. There are few systems in place to ensure pupils follow up on the written advice they receive, so they are not learning by making corrections often enough.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They understand their responsibility to listen carefully when their peers explain new ideas in class and they become adept at volunteering questions that challenge one another further. Pupils know their targets. They keep accurate records in their 'progress passports' so they focus on what they need to do to improve.
- The school grounds are well used to provide alternative learning activities where pupils enjoy being adventurous and working in teams.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe and they have a good understanding of the different types of bullying. Staff at the school reassure them by dealing with incidents quickly and effectively, although pupils say that these are rare. The school issues clear guidelines to help pupils recognise hazards and to take care of themselves. For example, pupils know to follow the rules about using their scooters safely in the playground and when crossing the road.
- Pupils are courteous and respectful, often thinking of others. For example, pupils in Year 6 recognise each other's good qualities to nominate their 'Wonder of the Week'.
- Pupils respond well to instructions so the school is calm and orderly. The behaviour of pupils is good and records show that this continues to improve. The introduction of the 'Thrive' programme helps pupils with behavioural needs learn to manage their emotions increasingly effectively. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of fixed-term exclusions this year.
- Pupils' behaviour is not outstanding because pupils say that sometimes they find it difficult to manage their conduct with each another. This means that they can become too boisterous on the playground and sometimes they distract one another when they are learning.
- The school's new strategies for promoting good attendance have had a positive impact. This has improved and is now broadly average.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has worked closely with the governors and the local authority to create challenging targets to improve the school. A new ethos of accountability means all staff are keen to improve and meet these aims. New systems are having a significant

impact improving pupils' achievement, their attendance and the quality of teaching. The school has good capacity to improve still further.

- The leadership of teaching is now thorough. Teaching is closely monitored and colleagues are provided with relevant training to improve their effectiveness. For example, teachers have developed group reading activities for early readers who have become more successful in their phonics screening check as a result. Underperformance in teaching has been tackled robustly. Senior leaders now withhold pay awards when their new high standards are not met.
- Senior leaders are committed to ensuring all pupils have equal opportunities and to eliminate any discrimination in learning. They routinely collect information about the individual progress of pupils and use this information to identify those at risk of underachieving. Most of these pupils benefit from additional support but this is not consistently effective for some disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance and development plans have been effective in raising overall standards. The school does not have a detailed overview of the performance of different groups so plans do not reflect the specific actions necessary to improve their achievement, particularly those for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Inconsistencies in the achievement of this group in particular prevent the school from being outstanding.
- Support from the local authority has been well used to develop the skills of middle leaders quickly. These colleagues have led improvements in the quality of teaching among their colleagues very effectively.
- Following on from the previous inspection, the school has developed the curriculum to ensure greater continuity in pupils' learning, especially in mathematics. A new calculation policy has been introduced and middle leaders hold teachers to account for implementing it consistently to reinforce pupils' skills.
- A good range of clubs, visits and visitors enhance the curriculum. Pupils are enthusiastic artists and competent performers. They take advantage of the many occasions to showcase their talents and the school is as keen to celebrate their achievements. Pupils are hugely appreciative of the opportunities to learn in the forest area of the school. With these opportunities, in addition to the emphasis placed on encouraging pupils to reflect on the different ways they learn, the school makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The primary school sports funding has been used to develop a good range of sporting opportunities as well as activities which promote an active lifestyle. Individual teachers receive training to fulfil particular coaching roles. The school takes advantage of the increasing number of sports events arranged through the South Dartmoor School Sports Partnership and inspirational sportspeople visit the school. There has been a significant increase in participation as a result.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Following on from the recommendation at the time of the previous inspection, the governing body has made significant improvements to its committee structure. New colleagues with appropriate skills have been invited to join and add their expertise. For example, governors now have an objective view of the quality of teaching and provide effective support to senior leaders managing teachers' pay awards. Governors have taken advantage of several training opportunities to develop their expertise, particularly in their knowledge of the school's performance data. They now have an independent view of the school's effectiveness so they are in a strong position to challenge senior leaders about pupils' achievement and their attendance. Thorough analysis of the impact of additional funding ensures that grants are well used and the achievement of eligible pupils continues to improve.
  - The chairs of the various committees have established their own systems for monitoring the impact of their work to ensure that the school maintains its rapid rate of improvement. These include checks on the extent to which they fulfil their statutory duties, including those to safeguard pupils' welfare, which are good. Members of the governing body have reviewed the school's finances to ensure that the budget is managed more effectively in the future.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113406
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	442498

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	190
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Richard Endean
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Squire
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14–15 November 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01803 864695
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