

# St Stephen's (Tonbridge) Primary School

Royal Rise, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 2DQ

**Inspection dates** 15–16 July 2014

|                                |                      |                             |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Requires improvement        | 3        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Requires improvement</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Requires 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 good enough progress in some parts of the school.
- Pupils' results at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 have not been consistently high enough since the time of the previous inspection.
- There is not enough good teaching in the school. Teachers do not always expect enough of pupils or give them enough challenge to enable them to achieve well.
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- The school has not yet ensured that pupils have a good understanding of the persistent nature of bullying and how it differs from one-off incidents of poor behaviour.
- Some parents and carers do not have confidence in the school's management of behaviour. This is partly because the school's communication with parents and carers about the differences between bullying and other forms of poor behaviour is not yet effective enough.
- Middle leaders are not yet sufficiently involved in analysing data about pupils' performance or in bringing about improvements to teaching.

### The school has the following strengths:

- The strong headteacher, supported by other senior leaders and governors, is raising the school's expectations of pupils' achievement, teaching and behaviour. Her insistence on good performance is improving the school.
- Better teaching has led to considerably improved results at the end of Key Stage 2 this year.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards learning. They mostly behave well in and out of lessons and when travelling around the school. The school keeps pupils safe and looks after them well.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors saw teaching in all classes. They observed two assemblies, 10 lessons and pupils' behaviour in the playground and at lunchtime. Three lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with pupils, four members of the governing body, the headteacher and other members of staff.
- The inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work, including support for pupils who need extra help. They heard pupils read and examined pupils' work in their exercise books and on classroom and corridor wall displays.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents, including plans for what pupils will learn in each subject, plans for the school's future development, and the school's use of the sports premium and pupil premium funding. They also examined the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe, pupils' attendance records, minutes of governing body meetings, records of how pupils' learning is checked and tracked, and records of how the quality of teaching is checked.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents and carers by considering 21 responses to the online Parent View survey, three letters and messages that were received, and through discussions with several parents or carers.
- Inspectors took staff views into consideration by looking at questionnaires completed by 25 staff members and through discussions with several members of staff.

## Inspection team

Steven Popper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kanwaljit Singh

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is higher than that found in most schools. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is much higher than average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs is also higher than in most other schools. Some pupils have speech, language and communication needs, while others have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or other needs.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have one Reception class provided for them.
- The headteacher returned to full-time work in September 2013 following a phased return from a sustained period of authorised absence. The deputy headteacher returned from maternity leave in April 2014. The previous assistant headteacher left the school at Easter 2014.

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

- Ensure that all teaching is good or better by:
  - making certain that all teachers give pupils, particularly the most able, a high level of challenge
  - making certain that all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Further develop pupils' understanding of the persistent nature of bullying and how it differs from one-off incidents of poor behaviour, and communicate with parents and carers more effectively about this difference.
- Develop the effectiveness of middle leaders by involving them more in analysing data about pupils' performance and in bringing about improvements to teaching.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils do not make good enough progress in some parts of the school, and because pupils' results at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 have not been consistently high enough since the time of the previous inspection.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills at levels below the typical for their age. They make good progress and are well prepared for Key Stage 1.
- Pupils' results at the end of Key Stage 1 improved last year, but this year's results in reading and mathematics declined and are too low. This is because the progress pupils make across Key Stage 1 is too variable.
- Pupils' results at the end of Key Stage 2 were much too low in all subjects last year, especially in writing. However, improvements to teaching have led to much higher unvalidated results in all subjects this year.
- Too few of the most able pupils achieved the highest results in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 last year or at the end of Key Stage 1 this year. The progress made by the most able pupils is not always as fast as could be expected. This is because teachers do not always give pupils sufficient challenge to enable them to do well.
- Pupils make better progress in some years than others, and sometimes their progress is too slow. This is because the quality of teaching, while improving, is not yet consistent. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes too low.
- The achievement of pupils eligible for additional funding has improved overall this year. However, the gap between pupils eligible for additional funding and other pupils has widened slightly at the end of Key Stage 2, though it is narrower in other years. This year the gaps in attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 are about two terms in mathematics and in English for these pupils
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make better progress in some years than others. Their progress is in line with other pupils in the school.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is variable in quality and does not ensure that pupils make good enough progress in all parts of the school.
- There is not enough good teaching in the school. Teachers do not always give pupils, particularly the most able, enough challenge to enable them to do well.
- Sometimes teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. As a consequence, pupils, including the most able, do not always make enough progress or achieve as well as they could.
- However, teaching is improving as a result of the headteacher's high expectations and insistence on teachers' good performance. The amount of good teaching in the school has increased, with the effect that pupils' provisional results at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved considerably.
- Teachers are now better at making sure that pupils understand the purpose of their activities and what constitutes good work. Pupils' attitudes to learning have improved as a result.
- Teachers' explanations and dialogue with pupils are effective and help them to learn. Teachers give pupils clear advice about how to improve their work in English and mathematics.
- Children learn well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teaching is focused and activities are purposeful. Children develop their basic skills well as a result.
- Teaching assistants support individuals and groups of pupils well. They offer pupils clear and helpful advice.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils** require improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The school has not yet ensured that pupils have a good understanding of the persistent nature of bullying and how it differs from one-off incidents of poor behaviour. Actual incidents of bullying are few and dealt with well, but pupils sometimes think that any incident of poor behaviour can be considered bullying.
- Some parents and carers do not have confidence in the school's management of behaviour and a minority of them expressed concerns about it. The inspectors did not find evidence to substantiate these concerns. However, the school's communication with parents and carers about the differences between bullying and other forms of poor behaviour is not yet effective, and this contributes to some parents' and carers' lack of confidence about the school's work in this area.
- The school introduced a new behaviour management policy in January this year. This has improved pupils' understanding of the standards of behaviour that are expected. However, the school is still working on ensuring that all staff implement the school's approach consistently. Some staff expressed reservations about the effectiveness of behaviour management in the school.
- Pupils demonstrate mostly positive attitudes to education and are keen to learn. Their attitudes to learning have been improved by the better teaching that many pupils have received this year.
- Pupils typically behave well in and out of lessons and when travelling around the school. They mostly work and play together happily and cooperatively. However, some low-level disruption does still exist and as a result, behaviour is not judged as consistently good.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are taught how to keep safe in different situations, such as when using the road.
- Pupils who talked to the inspectors said they felt safe and well looked after by the school, but also that a few incidents of poor behaviour did occur at times.
- Attendance has improved and is now in line with national expectations. This is because the school promotes the importance of good attendance through, for example, the use of attendance awards and messages in school assemblies.
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**The leadership and management** require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because school leaders and governors have not yet ensured that pupils make good enough progress in all parts of the school. Middle leaders as a group are not yet sufficiently effective in promoting school improvement.
- Since her return to full-time work, the headteacher, supported by other senior leaders and governors, has strongly raised expectations in the school. The school is improving in all areas as a result, but not yet to the extent that is required.
- The headteacher robustly monitors the quality of teaching and teachers are expected to perform to a high standard. Teachers are properly held to account for their success in improving pupils' progress and the standard of their teaching, and the headteacher has taken strong actions to ensure that the weakest teaching has been eradicated from the school. Teaching is improving as a result.
- The school has restructured the roles of middle leaders this year, with the result that their responsibilities are more clearly defined than previously. Some middle leaders, notably the leader responsible for mathematics in the school, have clearly been effective in bringing about improvements, but this does not extend to middle leadership as a whole. Middle leaders are not yet sufficiently involved in analysing data about pupils' performance or in bringing about improvements to teaching.

- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and thorough. It demonstrates the headteacher's high expectations. The school's development plan contains well-judged actions designed to bring about improvements, particularly to pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.
- The school provides pupils with a broad range of subjects and topics that they find interesting. Learning in school is supplemented by a range of clubs, visits and focused events, such as the school's 'Roman Day'. The school also provides pupils with pastoral care and supports their overall well-being carefully, for example, through in-school counselling for particular pupils when appropriate.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through engagement in art, music and sport. Pupils learn about a range of religions and cultures, such as Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Christianity. The school guards against discrimination and equal opportunities are promoted well. This can be seen through the school's inclusive approach and its desire to cater well for pupils with considerable special educational needs.
- The school strives to work effectively with parents and carers, and the majority who expressed an opinion are happy with the school and think it is well led. However, a minority have expressed some dissatisfaction with the school and its leadership.
- Additional funding is spent on a range of measures designed to support eligible pupils' learning and progress. As a result, the achievement of pupils eligible for additional funding has improved, though the gap between pupils eligible for additional funding and other pupils has widened slightly at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Other additional funding is spent effectively on developing teachers' skills in planning and teaching physical education effectively and further enhancing pupils' engagement in competitive sports, such as through a local gymnastics event.
- The local authority understands the school well and has given it strong support. The local authority has given training to staff and governors and helped ensure the accuracy of the school's assessment of pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors share the headteacher's high expectations and have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They understand data about pupils' achievement and use their understanding to challenge school leaders well. Governors' scrutiny of the school is organised and thorough. They contribute to the monitoring of the quality of teaching and keep a careful eye on the achievement of different groups of pupils. Governors check that teachers with good performance are properly rewarded and that support or other appropriate action is put in place if required. They monitor the school's finances carefully, including its use of additional funding, and ensure that these are spent sensibly.

## 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> | 118578 |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Kent   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 442490 |

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>                     | Community                                     |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4–11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed   |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 179   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                            |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Nicki Cadell                                  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Clare Escombe                                 |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 25–26 September 2012                          |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01732 354143                                  |
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