

Lady Modiford's Church of England (VA) Primary School

Walkhampton, Yelverton, Devon, PL20 6JR

Inspection dates

4–5 June 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		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

- There has been a decline in the achievement of pupils, particularly in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2, since the last inspection. This was due to weak teaching.
- Attainment in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 lags behind reading and mathematics. It shows little sign of sustained improvement. This is partly because pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise the skills of writing in other subjects.
- Teaching over time has not ensured that all pupils make good progress. This is because teachers have not used assessment information to plan work that is neither too easy nor too hard.
- The behaviour of some pupils occasionally disrupts the learning of themselves and others. This is particularly true in lessons where they are not fully occupied and interested in their work.
- Senior leaders have not checked the school's work rigorously enough over the past two years. This has led to the decline in achievement at the end of Key Stage 2.

The school has the following strengths

- The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are well cared for, are safe in school and have good relationships with staff. Pastoral support for pupils is strong.
- Governors are now holding the executive headteacher to account for the decline in achievement. This has led to an improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since September

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in six lessons, two of which were undertaken jointly with the executive headteacher.
- She listened to pupils from Years 2 and 6 reading.
- The views of pupils were gathered during a meeting as well as from discussions throughout the inspection.
- The views of parents were taken into consideration, including 30 who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View. The views from five letters received from parents, as well as those of parents spoken to during the inspection were also taken into account.
- The opinions of staff, expressed in the questionnaire as well as during discussions, were also considered.
- The inspector met with five members of the governing body and had a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority. She read reports produced by the local authority relating to their support for the school.
- The inspector looked at displays of pupils' work around the school, and looked at the work in pupils' books during lesson observations to find out how well they learn. She also had a more detailed look at samples of books from classes throughout the school.
- She held meetings with the school's special educational needs coordinator. She also met regularly with the executive headteacher and the head of teaching and learning.
- A wide range of school documentation was examined, including evidence on the progress being made by pupils, documents relating to the performance management of teachers, school improvement planning, and the minutes of the Governing Body's action plan monitoring committee.

Inspection team

Anne Newall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average primary school. It forms the West Dartmoor Federation, along with Meavy Church of England Primary School. They share an executive headteacher.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in the care of the local authority) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 are taught in two mixed age classes. Younger pupils are taught in separate Reception and Year 1/2 classes in the mornings, and together for the afternoons. Cohorts vary in size from four pupils to 16.
- There is an on-site breakfast and after-school club which is inspected separately.
- The school's 2013 results, the last year for which results are confirmed, did not meet the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been changes of teacher in three out of the four classes during this academic year.
- The school does not provide access to any alternative or specialist provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that work planned for pupils is neither too easy nor too hard, and builds upon their existing skills and knowledge.
- Ensure that pupils make consistently strong progress across year groups and subjects throughout the school, but especially in writing in Key Stage 1 and mathematics in Key Stage 2, by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to develop their writing skills across all subjects
 - ensuring all teachers have higher expectations of the presentation, and accuracy of spelling, of pupils' work
 - providing more challenging work in mathematics for all pupils and especially for the most able.
- Improve behaviour by:
 - reducing instances of low-level disruption in lessons so that all pupils can learn more effectively
 - managing the end of the school day more efficiently so that pupils leave the school in a calm and orderly manner.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the executive headteacher takes the lead in directing school improvement, determining the appropriate priorities and checking the effectiveness of actions taken
 - ensuring that senior leaders transmit an ambitious vision for the school to all staff which is clearly understood, and that staff understand their role in achieving the vision
 - ensuring communication from the executive headteacher to parents is timely, and parents are given sufficient notice of alterations to planned events.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because over time they do not make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in each year group. Standards reached in writing in Key Stage 1 lag behind those in reading and mathematics and are not yet catching up. This is because pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to practise their writing skills in other subjects.
- The achievement in mathematics of older pupils in Key Stage 2 is hampered because of weak teaching in the past. However, progress is now improving.
- In 2013, less than half the pupils in Year 6 attained the expected level in the national tests, with very weak performance in mathematics. The school's own assessments show that this group of pupils did not make as much progress as they should have done from their starting points.
- The school's leaders and governors took immediate action to improve the quality of teaching and check more closely on pupil progress following these results. These actions have begun to have an impact on pupils currently in the school, and achievement has significantly improved since September.
- Some inconsistencies remain between subjects and between year groups. This is because, over time, teachers have not had high enough expectations of what their pupils should achieve. In addition, teachers have not given pupils enough opportunities to practise basic skills such as spelling. Neat presentation of work has not always been a priority.
- The most able pupils have not made the progress of which they are capable in recent years because the work has not been challenging enough for them. This is changing, with more accurate matching of work to pupils' abilities. The impact of this is now being seen in improved work in pupils' books.
- Pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium make similar progress to their peers. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013, their attainment was around a term behind that of their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The special educational needs coordinator keeps a close eye on the progress of individual pupils, and discusses their support with the class teachers. Over time, there has been a reliance on additional support to help these pupils which has not always been successful in ensuring good progress. Now, as with other pupils, their progress in literacy and numeracy is steadily improving but there are still variations between classes.
- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities broadly or a little below those expected for their age. An additional teacher has been employed to teach these children every morning, so that they are taught separately from pupils in Key Stage 1. This is resulting in a greater proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year.
- Pupils are taught phonics (letters and the sounds they make) well, and the proportion reaching the required standard in the national screening check is above average. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils reach standards similar to the national average in reading. Pupils enjoy reading, and read from a range of authors and genres.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- There has not been enough good teaching over time to result in good achievement for all groups of pupils. Consequently, teaching requires improvement.
- There has been considerable instability in staffing over recent years, which has contributed to some of the variations in pupils' achievement. Three of the four classes this year have a new teacher. There is evidence from information about pupils' progress and from work in pupils' books that teaching has improved this academic year. It is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement, but there are still areas of relative weakness.

- Writing is not taught sufficiently well across a range of subjects to give pupils opportunities to practice their skills. In addition, teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. This particularly applies to the quality of spelling and the presentation of work.
- Teaching has improved since September. This is partly to do with new staff but also because of training and the sharing of expertise by senior staff and from partner schools. In addition, teachers are using information about pupils' progress more effectively to plan appropriate work.
- Occasionally, work is not planned to build on pupils' existing skills and, as a result, progress slows for some when their work is too easy or too hard. In particular, the most able pupils are not always provided with demanding work, which means they are not achieving the highest standards possible.
- The marking policy, implemented this year, ensures teachers give pupils more regular feedback about how to improve their work. Pupils say they like reading the comments and have time to respond appropriately, which helps them to learn.
- Teaching assistants support pupils well when they are given clear direction by the class teachers. There are occasions when their skills are not fully utilised and opportunities to support pupils more closely are missed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils show positive attitudes to staff and each other, being respectful and courteous. However, their attitudes to learning are not so well developed, and they drift into chatter when not fully occupied by their lessons, and at times disturb the learning of themselves and others.
- Pupils generally conduct themselves well. For example, they show respect in assembly, and in the dinner hall they chat and socialise in a friendly manner. On occasion, however, for example, when leaving the school at the end of the day, some pupils are unacceptably boisterous and noisy.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. All parents and carers who responded to Parent View believe the school takes care of their children and keeps them safe. The pupils also say they feel safe in school, and believe that the adults take good care of them.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet, for example in not sharing passwords with other people. They also know about different types of bullying, including cyber bullying, and say that bullying hardly ever happens but if it does, it gets sorted out by the teachers.
- Attendance is monitored by the school and the education welfare officer, and is broadly in line with the national average. Currently figures show a slight improvement on last year.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- School leaders did not monitor teaching and learning rigorously enough in the past to prevent the decline in standards since the last inspection.
- The local authority has given the school a good level of support since the underachievement evident in the Key Stage 2 national tests last year. It is providing effective guidance to bring about the necessary changes. Consequently, school leaders and managers now have a much clearer understanding of the school's effectiveness and of the impact of the quality of teaching upon pupils' achievement.
- Plans for improvement have been implemented, which are having a beneficial effect. Sometimes there are too many priorities and the school tries to tackle too many issues at the same time. As a result, there is a lack of clarity about what is most important and senior leaders find it difficult to check the effectiveness of actions taken.
- The executive headteacher has engaged well with this process. Nevertheless, he has not always

taken the lead in improvements. Neither has he been a visible presence reassuring parents that there is a drive to improve. Consequently, a significant minority of parents responding to Parent View and writing to the inspector felt that the school is not well led and managed. These parents feel that communication between themselves and the executive headteacher has broken down and their concerns are not addressed.

- The majority of parents who responded to Parent View or who spoke to the inspector are fully satisfied with the work of the school. They believe that the school provides a safe and happy environment for their children. These parents feel welcome in school and find all the staff approachable and friendly. On occasion, some parents are frustrated by lack of communication or by changes to planned school events.
- Leaders are now tracking pupils' progress more closely. They have successfully taken action to improve the quality of teaching by supporting teachers with extra training. In addition, there has been a sharing of expertise within the federation.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Through links with the local community including the church, Forest school activities and looking after the school's chickens, pupils' personal and social skills are well developed. Pupils sing beautifully, and have opportunities to take part in many creative activities.
- The staff do not tolerate discrimination of any kind, ensuring that all pupils, including those with disabilities or special educational needs, have equal opportunities to participate in the full curriculum.
- The curriculum, especially for English and mathematics, is not always planned well enough to enable all pupils to make good progress. There are interesting topics, such as 'extreme weather' and 'pirates'. Although there is some linking of subjects across topics, for example using mathematics in geography, these do not always provide opportunities to practise and develop pupils' basic skills.
- The school has used the primary sports funding appropriately to develop staff skills, widen the range of sporting opportunities for pupils, and to improve swimming at school. The school has employed a coach to develop the skills of staff and to improve swimming facilities. It is too early yet to gauge the full impact upon pupils' skills.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are diligently followed and requirements are met.
- Leaders and managers have secured some improvements in the quality of teaching and in pupil progress, which confirm that they have the capacity to improve further.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The local authority have provided good support to the governing body in the last year. As a result, governors have notably increased the rigour of their procedures to check the school's work and, through their monthly Action Plan Monitoring Committee, are holding the executive headteacher firmly to account for pupils' achievement. Governors have a good understanding now of the effectiveness of the school, and are determined to improve this. To help them achieve this, they undertake training applicable to their role, and have undertaken an audit of skills as well as a 'local authority health check' of their effectiveness. As a result, a further audit of the governing body is not considered necessary.
 - The governing body has a good understanding of the quality of teaching over time as well as currently within the school. Governors know the relationship between performance management and pupil performance, and do not move staff up the pay scale unless their performance warrants it.
 - The governors agreed the use of the pupil premium funding, and understand that the progress of these pupils, as with all pupils, requires improvement.

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	113481
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	439852

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	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Jenny Sharp
Headteacher	Gavin Hamilton
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 July 2010
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