

St Helen's Church of England VC Primary School

Greenhill Road, Alveston, Bristol, BS35 2QX

Inspection dates 27–28 January 2015

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Early years provision | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school has made rapid progress since the appointment of the headteacher. His challenging ambition for the school has been communicated extremely well and is shared by all staff and governors.
- Pupils make faster progress than they did at the time of the last inspection and are now making more progress than expected for their age.
- The quality of teaching is good, and has improved since the last inspection.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. In particular, pupils work keenly in lessons, are eager to do well and are proud of their efforts.
- Good provision is made for the children in the Reception class. They make good progress and achieve a good level of development.
- The headteacher is very ably supported by an effective and enthusiastic senior leadership team.
- The effectiveness of the provision is thoroughly checked, particularly the quality of teaching. Senior leaders and governors play a strong role in this.
- Governance is good. After the last inspection, governors carried out an audit of their skills and reorganised themselves to ensure that their expertise was being used to best advantage.
- The school has good systems for keeping pupils safe and provides a safe and secure environment.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The full impact of many of the systems introduced to improve the provision in 2014 has yet to be felt.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding because teachers do not have enough chance to learn from the best practice in the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 18 lessons, five of these jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors held meetings with leaders and managers, staff, pupils, a group of governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors met informally with parents at the beginning and end of the school days and analysed the results of the 87 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its self-evaluation, development planning and policies and procedures, including those relating to pupils' safety.
- The inspectors evaluated the school's information on the progress that pupils are making and scrutinised the work in pupils' books.

Inspection team

John Eadie, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Louise Warren

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Helen's Church of England VC Primary School is a little smaller than the average primary school and there is one class in each year group. Children in the early years Reception class all attend full time.
- Fewer than five pupils in each year group are eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority), which is well below average. There are currently no children looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The remainder are from a variety of minority ethnic groups. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is about one in eight, which is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher took up his post in January 2014. Four of the seven class teachers joined the school in September 2014.
- The school runs a breakfast club and provides space for an after-school club which is managed privately and will be inspected separately. These clubs provide wraparound childcare from 8.00am to 6.00pm.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the school's leaders:
 - monitor and evaluate carefully the effectiveness and impact of the systems which have recently been put in place to improve the provision
 - enable all teachers to learn from the best teaching in the school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Since his appointment, the headteacher has quickly built a very strong sense of ambition, teamwork and shared responsibility. He is very ably supported by a strong senior leadership team which has played a full part in the recent developments.
- Due to the relatively small size of the school and the number of new staff, most leadership roles are shared between the members of the senior leadership team. The few subject leaders are effective in their roles.
- Since its formation, the senior team has made significant improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and behaviour. The pace of this change has been rapid and there is good momentum for continued improvement. At the same time, the effectiveness and impact of many of the improvement measures are yet to be felt fully. There is much good teaching in the school, but this good practice is not sufficiently shared to enable all to learn from it.
- The pupil premium additional funding is used effectively. The progress of those pupils eligible is speeding up and the gap between their achievement and that of their classmates is closing.
- The primary sport and physical education funding is used well. Pupils are enthusiastic about representing the school in the new boys' and girls' football teams. An increase in after-school clubs and a doubling of the proportion of pupils attending them mean that almost three-quarters of pupils now participate in additional sports.
- There is a strong focus on equality of opportunity, fostered well by leaders who are keen that all pupils should benefit from all that is on offer. This is exemplified well by the school's successful work to improve the attendance of some persistent absentees. Discrimination in any of its forms is not tolerated.
- The curriculum is broad and rich and provides suitable challenge. It is exciting and engages pupils well. Literacy and numeracy are at its heart, ensuring that pupils develop these basic skills well. British values are fully embedded in the curriculum and the school prepares its pupils well for the next stage of their education and life beyond.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good and permeates the curriculum and the ethos of the school. The school's provision supports the emotional development of pupils well. Parents are well informed and given opportunities to support their children's education at home so that pupils can extend their understanding of values. A very imaginative innovation is the 'pause moments'. These are highly effective in encouraging pupils to build thinking time into their daily lives.
- Parents particularly appreciate the provision the school makes for out-of-school care. The breakfast club is popular and very well organised, with well-trained staff ensuring that these pupils have a happy and healthy start to the day.
- The school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe are rigorous and meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority gave good support after the last inspection and provided appropriate training, particularly for governors. However, since the recent changes have become apparent, the local authority now judges the school to be an improving school so, although support is still available, it is provided only at the school's request.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved very significantly since the last inspection. Governors have conducted an audit of their skills and ensured that their roles are matched to their expertise. Governors provide good support for a highly effective headteacher. They have a clear understanding of the data on pupils' progress and this enables them to challenge leaders and question the impact of initiatives to improve the provision. Governors fully understand the importance of enabling pupils eligible for the pupil premium to close the gap between their achievement and that of their classmates. They ensure that any additional funding is spent wisely. They know how good the teaching is and their own monitoring enables them to ensure that initiatives to improve its quality are effective and that salary increases are matched to improvement. The governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met in relation to safeguarding and solvency. They have high aspirations for St Helen's.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are courteous, considerate and supportive of each other. This is exemplified well in their behaviour at playtime which, while lively and happy, demonstrates that pupils are aware of the needs of others and adapt their play accordingly.
- Pupils show high levels of respect for adults, their peers and their environment. They take particular pride in the work in their books and are justly proud of its quality.
- Staff, governors and the vast majority of parents who responded to the online survey, agreed that pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils said that lessons are rarely disturbed by inappropriate behaviour.
- Very thorough records are kept of any incidents of poor behaviour. These show the effectiveness of the school's procedures for improving behaviour. Records for individual pupils reveal a significant reduction in poor behaviour over time.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is particularly good. Pupils are keen to learn and concentrate well. This is very noticeable when they begin the tasks they have been set. Even the youngest pupils rapidly get on with their work without fuss or question. Pupils enjoy helping each other when appropriate and appreciate the opportunities they are given to discuss their work. They rise well to high levels of challenge and persevere even when they are finding it difficult.
- A few children in the early years class are too easily distracted.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Safety procedures are thorough and kept under regular review. Risk assessments are rigorous and applied thoroughly.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They said that they know what to do if they encounter problems on the internet or suffer bullying. They are confident they can turn to an adult if they need to.
- Although a small minority of parents who completed the online questionnaire regard bullying as a problem, pupils said that it is rare, minor and dealt with very well when reported.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying. They know that they should not use racist, discriminatory or homophobic language, for example. However, although they are aware of the dangers of the internet, in their use of social media outside school they do not always follow the school's guidelines. This occasionally affects relationships in school.
- Pupils' attendance has improved and is now above the national average. Particularly impressive is the success of efforts to reduce persistent absence. Work with families has improved the attendance of these pupils dramatically.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and, as a result, pupils make good progress in all year groups in English and mathematics. Teaching is particularly strong in Year 1 and Year 5.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and their work. Lessons are often challenging and all pupils are keen to respond and move on to more demanding work. This results in the most able pupils fulfilling their potential and a good proportion attaining the highest levels.
- Teachers are generally good at assessing what pupils have learnt and adapting their planning accordingly. This assessment also helps them to pick up quickly on any who are in danger of falling behind. However, this good practice is not universal and there are occasions when teachers do not realise quickly enough that pupils are ready to move on to the next stage or need more help.
- Teachers are particularly self-analytical and know the areas they need to develop and how they can improve their teaching, but they do not have enough opportunity to learn from their colleagues.
- Teaching assistants play an important role in classes, aiding the progress particularly, but not exclusively, of pupils who are struggling with their learning. Sometimes, teachers do not direct teaching assistants well enough when they are teaching the whole class so that they are not sure what to do.
- Teachers' marking is thorough. Pupils said that they always know what they have to do to improve their work. They particularly appreciate the opportunities they are given to respond to teachers' marking and reflect on what they have done and learned.
- The teaching prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education as it is helping them to develop into enquiring and enthusiastic learners.

The achievement of pupils**is good**

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the last inspection and their progress has significantly speeded up in the six months since the last figures were published. In 2014, by the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils who had made the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics was similar to the national figure. Evidence from the inspection and the school's own data indicate that this proportion is now much higher.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium are making good progress from their starting points in all year groups and are closing the gap between their achievement and that of their peers. In 2014, there were too few of these pupils in Year 6 to comment on their relative progress and attainment.
- The most able pupils are achieving well. Although in 2014 an average proportion attained the higher Level 3 in Year 2 in reading and writing, the proportion attaining this level in mathematics was above average. The proportion attaining the higher levels in Year 6 was significantly above average in writing and broadly average in reading and mathematics. The proportion attaining the highest Level 6 in grammar, punctuation and spelling was also well above the national average. Overall, a good proportion of pupils across the school are currently working at higher levels than one would expect for their age.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress relative to their starting points due to the carefully planned provision and the support they receive in class.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve at least as well as their classmates, as do those who speak English as an additional language.

The early years provision**is good**

- From starting points which are below those typical for their age, children make good progress in the Reception class. An above average proportion achieved a good level of development in 2014. Children are therefore well prepared to join Year 1.
- An accurate analysis of the information gathered about the children by the early years team ensures that planning is informed by a good awareness of the needs of all groups.
- Leadership and management are strong. The early years leader has a clear plan of action to improve the provision which accurately identifies what needs to be done next.
- A clear focus on literacy and mathematics ensures that children made good progress in mastering these basic skills and supports their good progress in other areas of learning.
- Children enjoy their learning and are confident and generally engaged. There is a good balance between adult-led activities and those which the children choose themselves. Leaders are constantly reflecting on this balance to ensure that it meets the current needs of the children.
- There are developing links with the local pre-school and the early years leader is keen to develop these links further to ensure a consistency of approach.
- Children generally behave well, but staff recognise the need to raise expectations of their behaviour further so that all children are responsive and attentive and none becomes distracted.

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 | 109158 |
| Local authority | South Gloucestershire |
| Inspection number | 453512 |

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

| | |
|--|---|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 194 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Anne Straw |
| Headteacher | Andy Spens |
| Date of previous school inspection | 29–30 January 2013 |
| Telephone number | 01454 866530 |
| Fax number | 01454 866532 |
| Email address | sthelensprimary.school@southglos.gov.uk |

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2015

