

Stratford-sub-Castle Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School

Stratford Road, Salisbury, SP1 3LL

Inspection dates

13 – 14 May 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching of writing is not consistently good. The quality of writing is not as good in other subjects as it is in English lessons.
- Achievement requires improvement. Pupils' progress in writing is inconsistent. Pupils in Year 2 to Year 4 are not always expected to respond to the feedback they are given and this allows some simple errors to persist longer than they should.
- At times teachers provide support or answers too quickly, so pupils do not grapple with their work themselves.
- The most able pupils are not always given enough opportunities to undertake the most challenging work or to get on with their work as soon as they understand what they need to do.
- Leaders have not ensured that the school's actions to improve writing have been implemented as rapidly as they need to be. Leadership and management require improvement.
- Governors have not challenged sufficiently the speed with which improvements are implemented.
- The governors have not ensured that the school's policies are updated when there are changes to legislation.
- The documents to plan and record how the school keeps pupils safe are not always well organised or kept fully up to date.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, senior leaders and staff make pupils' personal development a high priority. They care a great deal about each pupil and make sure that individual needs are well known and met.
- Teaching of reading is a great strength of the school. Teaching of mathematics has been a focus for improvement and is often good.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in reading. Progress in mathematics has improved and is now good.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are very proud of their school and are keen to do the work teachers have prepared for them. They are kind and caring towards one another. They go out of their way to make sure all pupils are included in their games and in learning.
- The early years provision is a further strength of the school. Good leadership ensures children make at least good progress and become confident, curious learners.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited 11 lessons, looking at the learning of the pupils and the work in their books. Approximately two thirds of these observations were undertaken together with senior leaders. The inspector talked to pupils about what they were learning and the progress they make. He also considered the views of the teachers and senior leaders.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documents provided by the school, including: records about training undertaken by teachers and leaders; logs that record behaviour and accidents; teachers' planning for learning; senior leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning; minutes from meetings, including those of the governing body; the headteacher's reports to governors; and reports from external advisors.
- The views of parents were gathered through the 48 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. The inspector also spoke to many parents before and after school and took account of correspondence sent to him during the inspection. The views of staff working at the school were also considered through the 11 responses to a survey for staff and through discussions during the inspection.
- On the first day of the inspection, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors visited the school to undertake a pilot study for Ofsted.

Inspection team

Andrew Saunders, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are five classes, each of which includes a mix of year groups. Children in the early years provision typically attend school full time.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well above national average. In some year groups it is particularly high.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is at the national average. This includes pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after.
- At the time of the inspection, the school was in the middle of a building programme to provide new classrooms and facilities. These are due to be opened in September 2015. In 2014 the school met the current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Key Stage 2. These are set by the government for pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and managers should improve the teaching of writing to be as effective as that of reading and mathematics, by making sure that:
 - all teachers have high expectations of how much work pupils will complete in the time they have available
 - all teachers insist pupils grapple with their learning when they get stuck, before they ask for help from adults
 - pupils improve their work in response to the feedback they are given, particularly in Years 2, 3 and 4.
- Raise standards in writing at Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
 - making sure pupils use the targets teachers have given them to improve their writing in all subjects
 - expecting the most able pupils to work at higher levels from an earlier age.
- Make sure that governors hold the school to account more robustly for the pace and consistency of improvements by:
 - checking that all policies reflect the most up-to-date legislation and practice in the school, especially those related to keeping pupils safe
 - checking that improvements are implemented quickly and consistently to have a rapid impact on pupils' progress
 - ensuring that senior leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching are closely focused on the impact the teaching has on pupils' learning.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The headteacher and senior leaders have not brought about the same rapid improvements in the teaching of writing as they have in reading and mathematics. Although they give teachers helpful feedback, they have not checked rigorously enough that the improvements that need to happen are implemented consistently. Senior leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching are too generous at times and do not always focus sufficiently on the impact teaching has on the progress pupils make.
- Although the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe meet the statutory requirements, leaders and governors have not been sufficiently diligent in adapting the school's policies to reflect the latest requirements or the practice in the school. Although policies are reviewed at appropriate intervals, this does not always cater for changes that happen before the next review.
- Leaders have made sure that teachers fully understand their responsibilities about keeping all pupils safe and are confident to take action if they have any concerns. Senior leaders work closely with the local authority to ensure that any concerns are dealt with appropriately.
- Middle leaders share the vision for the school and understand their roles in bringing this about. They share responsibility for bringing about improvements within the areas they lead. However, along with senior leaders, they have not always acted with sufficient urgency to make sure improvements in writing are having the necessary impact.
- There is a strong sense of teamwork and a passion for providing pupils with a curriculum which is interesting and meets their needs. This is evident in the pupils' enjoyment of their learning and their good understanding of life in modern Britain.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is a great strength of the school. The emphasis on local, national and world events ensures pupils appreciate a broad spectrum of experiences and beliefs, alongside their own. For example, pupils responded very sensitively and maturely to a news clip about the recent earthquakes in Nepal.
- The school does a great deal to ensure every pupil has equality of opportunity and leaders tackle any discrimination. This rubs off on the pupils, who play a very significant part in helping one another learn and play together harmoniously. Pupils are particularly sensitive to those pupils with complex needs and make sure that everyone is included in their games and discussions.
- The school's systems to keep track of the progress of individuals help teachers, assistants and parents to plan carefully how they work together to support and nurture disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This is a strength of the school and reflects the ethos that each child is valued as a precious part of the community.
- The additional pupil premium funding is used effectively to give disadvantaged pupils extra support from adults, access to resources they would not otherwise have and to ensure they can take part in activities and visits available to all pupils. It also helps these pupils to develop their social and cultural understanding.
- The primary schools' sports funding has been used effectively to provide teachers with additional training to improve their confidence and skill in delivering high quality physical education lessons. It also provides resources and opportunities which enable pupils to take part in more competitive sports and to try out new sports, such as fencing and hockey. This means more pupils take part in physical activities. Pupils say that the quality of physical education and opportunities for competitive sports have improved; for many this is one of their favourite things about school.
- Parents have extremely positive views about the school. They particularly appreciate the sense of community and how well pupils from different backgrounds and with different abilities are valued, nurtured and enabled to thrive as individuals.
- The local authority has provided the school with a low level of support as there have previously been no concerns about its performance and leadership. Advisers have helped leaders to identify key issues and validate the school's own evaluation of its performance. Although this has identified writing as an important focus for the school to work on, it has not provided a sufficient sense of urgency about tackling the issue. The local authority recognises the school's strengths in supporting disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and in early years' provision.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have relied too readily on external advice about what they need to do, without checking for themselves that the school's policies comply fully with requirements when there are changes in legislation. They ensure that adults employed to work at the school have undergone the appropriate checks and that there are appropriate records of this.

- Governors have undertaken a review of the skills they have among them. They have used this to identify the training they need, accessing this from the local authority. However, they do not always investigate for themselves what they need to do.
- Members of the governing body receive a lot of information about what is going on in the school but do not always use this strategically to identify the most important things they need to consider. They do not always show enough determination in questioning what the information on pupils' progress show and how this relates to the quality of teaching.
- Governors spend lots of time in the school, both supporting the school and looking at how well the school community is working. However, their visits are not always focused well enough on checking that the changes that are being implemented are actually bringing about rapid improvements in the most important data.
- Governors work closely with the school to ensure that the finances available to it are used to provide good value for money. They understand that the quality of teaching and the performance of pupils must be taken into account when considering any additional pay awards. This is beginning to be reflected in their decisions.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They thoroughly enjoy school and like the topics they study. They are very kind, considerate and respectful towards one another and the adults in the school.
- Pupils are keen to do the tasks teachers have prepared for them, and seldom require any reminders to keep at their work. However, their behaviour is not outstanding because they are not always determined to work at a more rapid pace, or to implement the improvements teachers have identified beyond their immediate piece of work.
- During break times, pupils get along extremely well. Often the older pupils show great care for younger pupils in the school. Pupils feel they have plenty of opportunities to talk about their own ideas for their learning and how to improve things at the school. In particular, pupils show admirable consideration for those who may be in difficult circumstances, either in the school or further afield.
- The strong emphasis on personal development and the school's great care for the pupils mean they are confident young people by the time they are ready to move to secondary education.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. This is because the school's documents to record how it ensures the safety of pupils are not always kept up to date with the most recent practice and requirements. However, staff at the school clearly understand their responsibilities and take appropriate action if they have any concerns.
- Pupils themselves feel safe at school because there is always an adult they can talk to if there is anything they are worried about. They are confident that adults will listen carefully and take action quickly. Pupils feel very well cared for, and parents agree strongly. In particular, parents of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs commented on the great lengths the school goes to in taking practical steps to ensure their children are safe and well cared for.
- The school has made sure that pupils are aware of the importance of keeping safe while the building work is taking place. Pupils also talk positively about learning to be safe as pedestrians or when cycling. They understand how they need to take care when using the internet, to protect themselves.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The teaching of writing is not yet as effective as the teaching of reading and mathematics. Teachers give pupils targets to work towards in their writing. However, pupils do not always use these to guide them when they are writing in subjects other than English. Similarly, pupils are not expected often enough to implement the improvements teachers have suggested in their literacy books and, particularly, in other subjects. This constrains the progress they make in writing.
- Teachers do not always expect pupils to work hard enough. This means that pupils do not produce as much work as they could in the time available. This is evident in pupils' books. Similarly, teachers and other adults sometimes provide pupils with answers too quickly, before they have had enough time to grapple with difficult work for themselves, or to think what other strategies they can use to make headway in what they are doing.

- Teachers have had training in a range of approaches to promote and improve writing and these are beginning to have an impact. In particular, teachers ensure pupils work with a wide range of written materials and listen to adults and each other reading so that they experience and develop more ambitious vocabulary. However, many of these approaches are too recent for their success to be evident in pupils' work and the current data.
- Senior leaders and teachers have worked together to agree how to give pupils feedback on their work, including through marking. This is firmly embedded and all staff use the same approach. However, pupils are not always expected to respond to these comments, particularly in Years 2 to 4. This means that too many simple mistakes, spelling errors or incorrect punctuation continue longer than they should. As pupils get older they respond more frequently and make faster progress, but they still have a legacy of slower progress to overcome.
- Teaching of reading is highly effective because there is a broad range of books available and adults emphasise the importance of thinking carefully about what pupils read. Teaching assistants also have a good grasp of what is required when they lead groups of pupils learning phonics or reading for understanding. Adults create and find a wide range of interesting resources to make reading interesting for pupils and to ensure that there is a sense of urgency about this learning.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Standards in writing were below average in 2014 at the end of Year 6. The progress pupils make in writing is not consistent and requires improvement.
- The most able pupils achieve well in reading and mathematics but have not always reached the highest standards in writing. They are not given enough opportunities to get on with writing which is substantially more challenging, particularly when they are younger. Too often these pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- Achievement in reading has been an ongoing strength of the school. Pupils read widely and show considerable insight and enjoyment of their reading. Any pupils who struggle with reading are given additional support and this ensures they make up ground quickly. Standards of reading are well above average.
- There has been a successful focus on improving teaching and learning in mathematics, particularly developing mental mathematics skills and confidence. This means that pupils' progress in mathematics has accelerated and is now good for many pupils. The most-able pupils are given additional opportunities, for example when they are taught by a secondary-trained teacher, so their progress has accelerated, particularly in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress whatever their starting points, particularly in reading, mathematics and spelling, punctuation and grammar skills. Their progress in writing is improving more quickly than other pupils. This is because the school makes sure that their needs are carefully considered and that they are very well supported to develop the skills, knowledge and communication which help them to succeed.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is similar to that of other pupils; it is better in reading and mathematics, but not as good in writing. Their achievement requires improvement. At the end of Year 6 in 2014, there was an unusually large gap between these pupils and other pupils nationally because some had additional specific needs. Overall, these pupils were attaining in line with their peers nationally in reading, and just under a year behind in writing, mathematics, and in English grammar, punctuation and spelling. When compared to other pupils in school they were just over a year behind in reading, writing and mathematics and almost three years behind in English grammar, punctuation and spelling. The school has tackled this difference and this year the gap is considerably smaller.

The early years provision

is good

- Good leadership has ensured that all adults working with the children in the early years provision understand the needs of this age group. They make sure each child is well known and nurtured to learn effectively. From the start, there is a very close working relationship with parents so that the children feel confident and happy to come to school. Children who are disabled and those with special educational needs are particularly well supported.
- Children join the school with skills and knowledge which are often well below those that are typical for their age. This is particularly the case in listening and attention, their early reading skills and their ability to manage feelings and behaviour. The well-established routines and good use of resources, both indoors

and outside, mean children quickly become curious learners, eager to find out more about the world around them. The teaching of phonics is particularly effective and children become passionate readers. They make good progress in all areas and develop skills and knowledge which are comparable with those expected for their age. This means they are well prepared for learning in Year 1.

- Leaders have recognised the need to focus on the teaching and learning of writing in the early years provision. They have introduced a new approach to teaching letter formation and adults provide an increasingly wide range of opportunities for children to write. Some of these activities are led by adults, but others harness the children's own interests and play to help children to enjoy writing. This has improved the progress children make. These approaches are being implemented more widely to help improve writing in the rest of the school.
- The behaviour of children is good because the expectations of the adults are very clearly laid out and frequently reinforced, both through prompting and through recognition of good behaviour. Children are keen to live up to these expectations and help one another to think about what they are doing. The older pupils in the class provide good role models.
- Children are well trained to keep safe, particularly around the roads. The routines for dropping off and collecting the younger children at the school help children and families to be safe. Parents say how much they appreciate the great care adults take to ensure their children are happy and enjoy learning. Parents are well informed and helped to understand how they can support their children's learning at home, particularly through reading.

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	126361
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	461957

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	144
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angi Britten
Headteacher	Kay Bridson
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 March 2012
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