

St Benedict's Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School

Benedict Street, Glastonbury, Somerset, BA6 9EX

Inspection dates 15–16 June 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils' achievement, while rising rapidly, requires improvement because pupils do not always make good progress from their different starting points, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils' progress varies in different subjects and across year groups. Groups of pupils do equally well where teaching is stronger and less well where teaching is inconsistent.
- Pupils are not always able to use phonics (the link between letters and their sounds) to read and help them spell accurately.
- Teachers' expectations of how pupils should present their work are not always high enough.
- The teaching of basic mathematics skills is not as strong as it needs to be.
- Some teachers do not expect enough of pupils in lessons and over time.
- Teachers do not always make sure pupils make the best use of feedback to improve their work.
- Teachers' use of other adults does not consistently help pupils to make progress.
- Behaviour requires improvement because pupils lack the skills they need to be able to work effectively, too often they can become easily distracted and lose concentration.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has tackled the decline in standards since the last inspection successfully. He has a clear vision for the future, which is shared amongst all staff and governors.
- Governors have been instrumental in improving the provision at the school. They hold leaders to account and are well informed about the quality of teaching and how well pupils are doing.
- Since the arrival of the headteacher, underachievement has been tackled and pupils' progress is accelerating. Pupils now make good progress in writing.
- Systems for checking and monitoring teaching now focus effectively on learning. Leaders at all levels help to contribute to this and so leaders' evaluations are now accurate.
- Teaching and learning are improving. The quality of some teaching is now of a very high standard.
- Rigorous safeguarding arrangements help ensure pupils are well looked after. Pupils are right to say they feel safe.
- The curriculum has a number of strengths. British values have been promoted well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and moral development is good.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons across a range of subjects, as well as an assembly. Five lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school, at playtime, lunchtime and at the beginning of the school day. They analysed pupils' work, talked with pupils and listened to a selection of pupils read.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, three members of the governing body and the national leader of education (NLE) who is the headteacher at Huish Primary, which is a teaching school currently supporting the school.
- Inspectors looked closely at school documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings, the school's analysis of how well it is doing, the school improvement plan and data and tracking information about pupils' achievement. Inspectors also reviewed the school's behaviour logs.
- Inspectors took account of 54 responses from parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and two letters submitted during their visit. Inspectors analysed 16 responses to the staff questionnaire provided by Ofsted.

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lyn McNamara

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Benedict's Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior is a smaller-than-average-sized school with two classes in each year group from Year 3 to Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after, is well above average.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are much lower than the national averages.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is much higher than the national average.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher joined the school after the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to ensure that all is good or better, by:
 - making sure the teaching of basic mathematics skills is consistent and effective
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve so that it is consistently high at all times
 - ensuring pupils make the best use of teachers' feedback so that it consistently improves their work
 - ensuring other adults are deployed effectively to support pupils' progress.
- Raise pupils' achievement further by ensuring:
 - pupils can use their phonic skills to read fluently and spell accurately
 - pupils are more confident to use their mathematical skills to solve problems
 - pupils improve their presentational skills, including their handwriting, and take more pride in all of their work
 - pupils make consistently good progress across year groups and subjects.
- Improve pupils' attitudes to learning so that pupils develop a love of learning and want to do well for themselves.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management are good because the determined, measured and robust leadership of the headteacher has led to rapid improvement in provision. He has built a leadership team around him that has significantly improved the effectiveness of the school. Leaders have already reversed the downward trend in standards that had started after the last inspection.
- The headteacher demonstrates an unwavering focus on improving pupils' achievement through the quality of teaching. In this he is ably supported by other senior leaders, governors and subject leaders. Staff are strongly committed to helping achieve a good quality of education for pupils. The school is very well placed to improve further.
- Leaders' monitoring of the school is rigorous and effective. Leaders at all levels check the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility carefully. They triangulate the evidence they collect effectively and challenge each other's views. This helps ensure that leaders' evaluations of the effectiveness of the school are accurate and useful to plan further improvements.
- Improvement planning is well targeted at remaining weaknesses. It is clear that, in some areas, improvement is accelerating more rapidly, for example in English. Leaders have rightly identified the need to focus more of their attention now on the teaching of mathematics.
- The performance management of teachers is now robust and has helped bring about improvements in the quality of teaching. Teachers benefit from clear and challenging targets that relate to pupils' achievement and help them to focus on what they need to do better in their practice. The headteacher ensures that teachers are held to account robustly and that there is an appropriate link between the performance of staff and their pay.
- Subject leaders demonstrate the skills needed to lead improvements in their areas of responsibility. They contribute to the monitoring of the school and lead useful training for staff to help them improve their practice.
- The headteacher, in addition to his drive in improving standards, has worked hard to maintain a broad and balanced curriculum. For example, other subjects are given a strong place in pupils' learning experiences, such as science, art, history and physical education. Leaders have made effective preparations to deliver the necessary changes to the National Curriculum. All staff work hard to make the curriculum exciting and meaningful for pupils. There is also a number of extra-curricular opportunities which pupils benefit from, including a large number of school clubs, visits and residential.
- Pupils enjoy the strong sense of community that is promoted at the school. Their spiritual, cultural, social and moral development is catered for well. They understand and learn to value other faiths and beliefs. This helps pupils to work and play well together across the eclectic population of the school. Learning opportunities, teaching programmes and the systems established in school make sure that everyone is included and valued. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and there is equality of opportunity for all.
- Pupils have a practical understanding of British values. For example, their understanding of democracy is extended and deepened in Year 6 by visiting the Houses of Parliament and listening to debates in the House of Commons. Strong links with a school in Zambia help pupils to understand how life is different in different parts of the world. Pupils seek opportunities to raise money for those less fortunate than themselves, such as the talent show they organised to raise money for the Philippines Typhoon appeal and fund a cow for a family in Ethiopia.
- Leaders have made good use of the sport fund. Pupils now have access to high quality physical education lessons. Many of these are now led by skilled sports coaches. Teachers have also received useful training opportunities to develop their own practice. The school has been awarded the Silver Mark in the Sainsbury's School Games scheme. The deputy headteacher monitors pupils' access to sports clubs run by the school and in the local community and has plans to further develop pupils' participation in sport.
- Leaders have made very good use of external support provided by the local authority in the form of the NLE. Teachers and leaders have been given useful opportunities to develop their practice by working alongside staff from the teaching school with similar responsibilities. This has allowed the headteacher to develop leadership capacity at St Benedict's Junior, as well as raise teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve.
- Leaders have been creative in their use of the pupil premium grant. Their careful analysis ensures funding is making a positive difference to the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders and managers use this information effectively to plan how money will be used in the future to continue narrowing the gap in attainment for these pupils.
- Leaders have ensured that their arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and

are effective.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body has been a key component in improving outcomes for pupils at the school. Governors robustly challenge leaders to bring about improvements. They ensured that changes in leadership led to improvements that were needed to teaching and learning, having recognised the fall in standards since the previous inspection. Governors' effectiveness in holding leaders to account ensures the school has the capacity to improve in the future.
- Governors receive useful information from school leaders on how well teaching supports learning. They follow this up effectively, by regularly visiting the school to see it at work and through the accurate analysis they make of how well pupils are doing at the school compared to pupils locally and nationally. Governors are well placed to ensure teachers are rewarded appropriately through their pay when staff are effective.
- Governors have also been effective in ensuring the appropriate use of resources. For example, they have worked closely with the deputy headteacher to check the difference the sport fund has made to the quality of teaching, pupils' attitudes and levels of participation in sport. They have also worked with the headteacher to ensure that the pupil premium grant is used effectively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils are polite, well-mannered and enjoy school. However, in some lessons, pupils have not developed the skills they need to apply their knowledge and improve their work. When teachers do not set work which enthuses and encourages pupils' learning, pupils lack the resilience needed to stay focused on their work.
- Pupils behave well during break and lunchtimes. Pupils play happily together in the outdoor areas and quiet play spaces. They use a range of games and play equipment appropriately to enrich their experience.
- Pupils are clear that bullying is rare. They say that they 'can't remember the last time it happened'. They report that, on the very rare occasions it has happened, it is always dealt with effectively.
- The headteacher has established an approach to the management of behaviour that is known and understood by the pupils. Record keeping is rigorous which ensures a consistency of approach by all staff. Every class has their own behaviour log and there is a single whole school behaviour log for recording instances of serious behaviour. There were two isolated incidents that resulted in fixed-term exclusions at the school during the current academic year. The school's behaviour logs indicate that behaviour is improving and serious incidents are on the decline.
- Pupils learn about responsibility by becoming monitors for assembly, members of the school council or peer supporters. All pupils talk with genuine respect and trust about the playground peer supporters and describe them as 'the first people to go to with a problem'.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- There is a well-established safeguarding team, which includes school leaders and staff directly involved in support work to keep pupils safe. During regular safeguarding meetings, the health and well-being needs of every pupil are reviewed and logged. This ensures that timely, appropriate action is triggered to support pupils and their families when necessary.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying. They have worked in partnership with a local charity to produce their own information film for use in assemblies and lessons to raise awareness about different kinds of bullying, how to deal with the way it makes you feel and what to do to help it stop.
- Attendance is below the national average. Over time, pupils have missed too much school. However, the parent and family support adviser and headteacher have established rigorous systems to support and advise families and, as a result, attendance is improving.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across the school is variable and not yet consistently good. It requires improvement because some teachers' expectations of what pupils will achieve are too low. This means that pupils are not always sufficiently challenged to do their best and so do not learn as quickly as they could in all lessons and over time. However, because of the difference made since the arrival of the

headteacher, teaching is improving and is helping more pupils to make good progress.

- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. However, the feedback that is given does not always help pupils to know what they need to do next, or how they could improve their work. At other times, teachers' feedback is very detailed and precise, but pupils' responses are sometimes limited and do not make the most of the feedback to increase their progress.
- When expectations are higher, pupils make much better progress. For example, in a Year 6 lesson about the use of figurative language in poetry, pupils were expected to discuss and share their ideas in small groups and then as a class. The high expectations and engagement elicited by the teacher ensured that pupils' ideas and word choices improved as a result.
- Teachers' deployment of teaching assistants and other adults is not always as effective as it could be. At times, teaching assistants give the pupils they are working with too much guidance and so pupils do not learn to apply concepts for themselves. In some lessons, time is not always used effectively and so staff do not make as much of a difference to pupils' progress as they could.
- Leaders have introduced a number of new strategies to improve the teaching of writing and these are effective. Pupils are now clearer about what they need to do to write effectively. Teachers ensure that there are links between what pupils are learning about in their topics and what they are asked to write about. As a result, pupils' enjoyment of writing has increased and pupils are achieving more success.
- The teaching of mathematics varies. Where it is stronger, teachers use questioning effectively to help pupils solve problems for themselves. There is also good use made of modelling to help pupils learn new concepts and build on what they already know. However, where it is less effective, teachers lack the subject knowledge needed to ensure pupils master the basic skills needed to calculate with confidence. Pupils do not always get the opportunity to deepen their understanding by applying their skills in solving problems.
- The teaching of reading has some strength, but this is not consistent. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and often. Texts studied in class engage pupils and are helping to develop their love of reading. However, pupils do not have a strong enough understanding of phonics to read unfamiliar words to help them read fluently. This also affects their ability to spell accurately.
- Teachers match work to the different abilities of pupils effectively. This has been particularly effective in increasing the challenge of work for the more able.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable from their different starting points at the school. After the previous inspection, pupils' achievement declined sharply. Leaders have now taken effective action to reverse this declining trend, so that pupils are making much stronger progress. Inconsistencies remain, however, because teaching is too variable, particularly in mathematics, and not enough is always expected of pupils.
- Pupils have attained levels that have been below average at the school in the past. There was a slight improvement in results in 2014, particularly in writing, but overall results remained below national averages in reading and mathematics. However, the work in pupils' books and the school's current tracking data demonstrate that pupils are set to achieve much better results this year. There is also evidence that pupils are now making better progress overall, although there remain weaknesses in certain year groups.
- Pupils are achieving better in reading and writing than in mathematics. This is because work to improve achievement in English has been effective. Although leaders' work in mathematics has shown an improvement from the underachievement of previous years, there is still further to go in developing pupils' calculation skills.
- Work seen in pupils' books shows that pupils are now making strong gains in their literacy skills and better gains in their numeracy skills. Pupils are given useful opportunities to apply their skills in writing across other parts of the curriculum. However, pupils' presentational skills are poor across all year groups.
- Different groups of pupils, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, make similar progress as each other. Where teaching is stronger, all groups make better progress; conversely, where expectations remain lower, all groups do not do as well. The achievement of more-able pupils is now much more consistent, as reflected in the much higher proportions who are on track to achieve the higher levels in the current Year 6 cohort.
- The achievement of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is improving and they are closing the gap in attainment with their peers. This is because leaders have tackled the underperformance of these pupils effectively. Compared to other pupils nationally, these pupils attained levels at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 that were over a year behind in reading, over a term behind in writing and a year and half behind in

mathematics. Last year they were less than a term behind their peers in school in reading and writing and just under two terms behind their peers in school in mathematics. Current eligible pupils in Year 6 have made better progress than their peers in school in reading, writing and mathematics. They look likely to attain levels that are much closer to their other pupils nationally.

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	123833
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	456255

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs M Leggett
Headteacher	Mr S Gumm
Date of previous school inspection	October 2011
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