

St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Lansdown View, Timsbury, Bath BA2 0JR

Inspection dates	29–30 September 2015
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Until recently, the quality of teaching has been too variable. Consequently, outcomes for all groups of pupils, although improving, have not been consistently good.
- Over time, not enough pupils have made good progress in mathematics and too few made rapid progress.
- Pupils' attainment is uneven. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in some subjects have been average, but remain below average in others, particularly mathematics.
- In the past, teachers have not set work which is hard enough for those pupils with lower starting points. Consequently, these pupils have not always made the progress expected of them.
- Recent changes to the curriculum in mathematics provide pupils with more opportunities to solve problems and investigate their ideas. However, these changes have not been in place for long enough to enable pupils to make progress that is consistently good.
- Leaders have set a clear direction and taken appropriate steps to address weaknesses in teaching. These actions have begun to raise progress and address previous underachievement.
- Governors are becoming more confident in asking challenging questions about the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils. Despite monitoring the impact of the pupil premium, at the time of the inspection governors have not published the results to parents.

The school has the following strengths

- Assemblies and the curriculum provide good contributions to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' progress in writing has improved so that the vast majority now make the progress expected of them.
- Pupils generally behave well and know they are safe in school. They are proud of their school and know that the adults are working hard to make it even better.
- Children get off to a positive start in the early years and settle quickly into school routines.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and so raise pupils' achievement by ensuring that all teachers:
 - routinely set work that challenges pupils of all abilities
 - provide wider opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in reasoning and problem solving to deepen their understanding of concepts in mathematics.

- Ensure that governors, leaders and managers maintain the drive to raise standards in all subjects by ensuring:
 - close monitoring of the new initiatives in mathematics to check the difference they are making in developing pupils' calculation skills
 - that actions set out in the school's improvement plan are resulting in increased levels of progress for pupils of all abilities
 - the governing body publishes an annual account of the school's use of pupil premium and its impact on raising standards.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders, including governors, are making the changes that are beginning to have a positive impact on raising the standards. While there has been some success, these actions, partly the result of staff changes, have not yet led to pupils making consistently good progress across the school.
- The subject leader of mathematics is new to their role and has not been in post long enough to raise pupils' mathematical achievement. However, they have introduced new resources and have already produced a policy setting out how the school will develop pupils' calculation skills across each year group so that gaps in pupils' development in calculation are identified more quickly.
- In collaboration with the local authority, senior leaders have been supported to tackle weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning. Close links with subject leaders in other local schools are helping to improve the leadership, teaching and curriculum in mathematics.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and leaders have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Senior leaders' views on the school's performance have been confirmed in collaboration with other local schools and by representatives of the local authority. The school's improvement plans highlight the correct priorities and appropriate actions but have yet to result in sustained improvements.
- Leaders regularly check the quality of teachers' work and provide straightforward and specific feedback to teachers that accurately identifies the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching. While this approach has tackled immediate weaknesses in teaching, it has not yet led to consistently good teaching across the school.
- Some parents expressed concerns in the online questionnaire about the school's management of bullying and pupils' behaviour. Inspectors found pupils behaved well and were clear that pupils' concerns were acted upon by staff. Leaders and managers are aware of parental concerns and have appropriate plans to involve them more fully in their children's learning and the life of the school.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination appropriately. The provision for disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to develop their writing skills is helping them to make better progress. However, the use of additional funding is having limited impact in helping to support pupils' mathematical development.
- The school's newly implemented curriculum provides a wide range of learning experiences for pupils that is helping to promote good behaviour. The teaching of writing is complemented by a well-organised approach across other subjects. Changes to the mathematics curriculum focus on developing pupils' calculation skills and providing practical resources.
- Leaders support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through assemblies and the curriculum, helping their preparation for life in modern Britain.
- The school has used the school sport funding to help staff develop their practice by working alongside highly skilled sports coaches. The school uses the money to provide pupils with a wide range of recreational sports and the uptake at clubs is high.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Since the previous inspection, the governing body has participated in an external review of its work. The governors have conducted an audit of skills, new governors have been appointed and they have undertaken relevant training. Governors have made stronger links with year groups of pupils and make regular visits to school to monitor improvements. As a result, they are becoming more confident in asking challenging questions about the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils. They understand the importance of comparing school results with other schools nationally.
 - Governors have a clear understanding of the school's system to manage staff performance, including tackling any underperformance and improving teachers' practice. They know how performance is linked to pay progression.
 - Governors ensure that school finances are well directed to supporting improvements in teaching and learning. They check on how the school spends additional funds to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and to develop school sports. They are aware that the school's website does not contain the required information to show parents how the money is being allocated and the difference it is making.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and show leaders' determination to ensure pupils' safety. All staff training is up to date and individual cases of concern are followed up to maintain pupils' well-being and ensure that pupils are kept safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching had been too variable across the school and subjects. It has not been effective enough to ensure that pupils' progress has been consistently good over time.
- Teaching has not always challenged pupils of all abilities sufficiently. Leaders have taken steps to increase teachers' expectations of all groups of pupils and to plan suitably demanding work. While this work is showing some positive signs, it is too early to assess the full effect of these actions.
- Changes to the way mathematics is taught are ensuring that pupils have more regular opportunities to solve problems. However, these are not extensive enough yet to ensure that pupils deepen their understanding of concepts through reasoning and explaining their ideas and methods. Teachers do not always ensure that pupils use mathematical terminology.
- Senior leaders give constructive and frequent feedback to teachers about how to improve their practice, followed up by appropriate support and training. As a result, teachers are clear about what they need to do to improve and what should be required from each group of pupils in their class.
- The teaching of writing is well structured, particularly in teaching handwriting and spelling. This is helping pupils to write fluently. There are many opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills across other subjects. As a result, current groups of pupils are making faster progress in writing and attainment is rising across the school.
- Teachers mark pupils' books regularly. Teachers are expected to give pupils advice about how to make improvements to their work. Increasingly, pupils are responding to teachers' comments and making the necessary changes, leading to better progress.
- The teaching of reading is helping pupils to make better progress, but this is not yet consistent across all year groups and requires improvement. Older pupils benefit from the encouragement they receive from their teachers to read a wide range of literature and to try different authors so that the majority of older pupils reach expected levels by the time they leave the school in Year 6.
- Teachers and teaching assistants combine well together to provide effective support for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs to develop their writing. They help pupils to develop their writing skills across a range of subjects, both in lessons and in small groups.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils know how to stay safe. They receive good guidance through lessons and assemblies in developing skills that will keep them safe in their lives. They know that they can trust staff to listen to them and are encouraged to speak out when they have any concerns.
- Attendance is in line with the national average for most groups of pupils and there is very little unauthorised or persistent absence. The school has clear systems to address any concerns and has been successful in ensuring that all groups of pupils now attend regularly. Punctuality is good.
- Pupils are clear that any displays of bullying and derogatory or aggressive language are rare and that teachers deal with any unsafe behaviour quickly and effectively. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the dangers of the internet and know how to keep themselves safe online.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Typically, pupils are polite, friendly and work well together in pairs or small groups. They concentrate well and try hard with their learning. This is contributing to the better progress now being made.
- On rare occasions, a few pupils lose focus when the activities are too easy or too difficult, and then some time is wasted.
- Relationships throughout the school are positive because the adults know the pupils well. The school fosters good relations and tackles discrimination appropriately.
- Pupils, parents and staff are mostly positive about standards of behaviour. Some parents expressed concerns about behaviour in the online survey, but inspection evidence shows that behaviour is managed well. The school's records show that there have been very few incidents of poor behaviour in recent years. The small numbers of pupils whose behaviour has given rise to concern have been supported well, successfully eliminating the need for exclusion.

- Pupils say they are proud of their school and enjoy all the activities and sports clubs on offer. They relish taking on responsibilities, such as being house captains or taking part in the 'Learning to lead' programme. This helps to foster teamwork and a strong sense of responsibility for others.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because not all pupils, including those currently on roll, have made enough progress over time. Consequently, not all pupils have reached the levels of which they are capable.
- Progress in mathematics is too variable, both over time and for current pupils. Until recently, the work has not been set consistently with the right level of difficulty and pupils did not use the correct mathematical terminology. The current focus on mathematics by school leaders is enabling more pupils to deepen their mathematical understanding and develop their calculation skills.
- The school's own information, about pupils' achievement for Year 6 in 2015, shows that attainment is likely to be close to the national averages in reading and writing but below in mathematics. Across Key Stage 1, attainment has risen and is likely to be above average in writing and at least average in reading and mathematics. In 2015, the proportion of pupils in Year 1 reaching expected levels in the national phonics check is broadly in line with the national level.
- Pupils' progress in writing has improved recently so that the vast majority of pupils make the progress expected of them. Irrespective of their starting points, pupils of different abilities develop their writing skills at similar rates because activities interest pupils and are closely matched to their needs.
- Pupils with higher starting points are not always challenged to do as well as they can. Recent changes to the curriculum are providing more stimulating challenges for these pupils across the school. For example, in the Year 5 class, pupils were very excited about a new way of doing multiplication calculations that made them think really hard.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to others in school. The progress they make in writing is improving but progress in mathematics is less rapid, with too few making the progress expected of them. These pupils are now being challenged more routinely in their work.
- Across the school, disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to others in school in mathematics but less than others nationally. In reading and writing, disadvantaged pupils often make more progress than their classmates and others nationally. Consequently, the gaps between their attainment and that of others with similar starting points in reading and writing are closing.
- Pupils' progress in reading is improving. However, in 2015 the overall progress Year 6 pupils made from where they were in Year 2 remained in line with the national average. The proportion of children in Year 1 who are confident in reading unfamiliar words, higher than average in 2014, declined to national levels this year.
- More pupils are participating in a variety of sporting activities and competitions, supported by the sports funding. They say they enjoy competing in events such as cross-country running and playing basketball.

Early years provision

is good

- Children settle quickly into the Reception class because routines and good relationships are swiftly established. Children, including those who have special educational needs, and those for whom the school receives additional funding, make good progress from their various starting points.
- The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception has risen year on year in line with national averages so that the majority of children are ready to start Year 1 as confident learners.
- The early years leader knows well the strengths and weaknesses in the setting. Plans are in place to improve the outdoor provision, which is not as good as that found indoors. She has already implemented a training programme for new staff. Good use is made of visits to other local schools and further afield to see best practice and glean ideas.
- The school leaders check rigorously that all possible steps are taken to ensure that the children are safeguarded. Children behave well and understand the safety routines, including handwashing before eating, for example.

- The adults support children well in their learning and their personal development. They look after children well and offer warm encouragement to promote good learning.
- Effective links with home are soon established and parents are encouraged to become part of their child's learning journey through activities such as the 'golden pot' and the much-treasured learning logs. The 'Mystery readers' activity when a parent or relative appears unannounced to share a book with the class, captures children's imagination very effectively, sparking their interest in reading.
- Children are motivated by a wide range of classroom resources. These stimulate their interests and allow them to explore their ideas. For example, they love practising 'dough gym' to get their fingers ready for writing and develop their coordination skills.

School details

Unique reference number	109208
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	10006378

This inspection 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	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gary Reed
Headteacher	Alice Brown
Telephone number	01761 470245
Website	www.stmarystimsbury.co.uk
Email address	stmarystimsbury_pri@bathnes.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 June 2013

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average primary school. Children join the school in the Reception class. Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils are organised into six classes, all of which are single-age group.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British.
- All children in the early years (Reception class) attend full time.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or children who are looked after by the local authority. Currently there are no children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school, some in conjunction with the deputy headteacher. In addition, they made visits to classrooms, assemblies, the dining hall and the playground.
- The inspectors held meetings with pupils, members of the governing body and school leaders. The lead inspector also met with two representatives of the local authority who support the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 49 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as written correspondence, and consulted informally with parents at the start of the school day. They also took account of the 16 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's improvement plans. They examined information on current pupils' progress, minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding procedures and plans for the use of the additional sports funding.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, talked to them in classrooms and evaluated samples of their work.

Inspection team

Sandra Woodman, lead inspector

Ofsted inspector

Duncan Heryett

Ofsted inspector

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