

# St James' Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Guildford Road, Colchester CO1 2RA

<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 January 2016
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Achievement is too low in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the standard expected at the end of Year 6 in 2015 was only marginally above the government floor standard – the minimum standard expected of schools.
- Pupils are not making fast enough progress from their starting points.
- Leaders have not tackled the issues identified at last inspection which continue to remain weaknesses in the school.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school is too generous. Plans for improvement are not focused on the key areas of weakness.
- Governors do not challenge leaders sufficiently about important decisions such as the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils or funds to promote achievement in PE and sport.
- Leaders are not doing enough to swiftly eradicate weak teaching or to hold teachers to account for pupils' achievement in their class.
- Teaching is not meeting pupils' needs because assessment is not being used effectively and teachers do not have high enough expectations.
- Assessment of children on entry to the reception class is inaccurate, so teachers underestimate what some of them can achieve.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) does not enable all pupils to achieve well.
- More-able pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language or who are disadvantaged, are not making sufficient progress because teachers do not plan lessons which challenge them.

### The school has the following strengths

- Staff are committed to keeping pupils safe and making them feel welcomed and valued.
- When teaching is good, pupils show enthusiasm and interest in their learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. As a result, pupils are tolerant and respectful of each other.

## Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes by:
  - rapidly increasing the numbers of pupils who make good or better progress in reading, writing and mathematics so that pupils achieve at least as well as others nationally by the end of Key Stage 2
  - providing greater challenge for more-able pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language and those who are disadvantaged
  - increasing achievement in phonics so that more pupils achieve well in reading in Year 1
  - ensuring that assessment of pupils when they join the reception class is accurate and provides a clear picture of pupils' strengths and areas for development.
  
- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that:
  - teachers accurately identify what pupils currently know and what they need to learn
  - teachers use accurate assessments to plan lessons that are neither too easy nor too hard for pupils
  - teachers check more regularly on pupils' understanding during lessons
  - all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons.
  
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - undertaking a regular and accurate evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and using this information to create a clear plan for improvement that is rigorously followed through
  - ensuring that all leaders understand and fulfil their responsibilities for improving the performance of the school
  - regularly and systematically checking and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, taking prompt action when it is not good enough and giving clear guidance to teachers on how to improve
  - ensuring that governors provide greater challenge for leaders and hold them to account more robustly
  - evaluating the impact of interventions, particularly those to support disadvantaged pupils
  - holding all staff accountable for raising outcomes by rigorously managing their performance.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

The school may not employ newly qualified teachers.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Senior leaders have an unrealistic view of the school and its strength and weaknesses. Their evaluation is overly positive and is not an accurate picture of the school's past and current performance.
- Leaders have not taken effective action to ensure that pupil outcomes have risen since the last inspection; in some areas they have declined.
- Leaders do not recognise that the school's low outcomes are a result of inadequate teaching over time which they have not tackled.
- Senior leaders and governors have not maintained a tenacious focus on making the required improvements. They have not ensured that plans have been implemented or rigorously monitored to ensure that the school moves forward.
- Leaders lack ambition for pupils and as a result staff expectations of what pupils can achieve is too low.
- The headteacher has not created a cohesive staff team who are committed to working together to improve outcomes for pupils. Senior and middle leaders are not working effectively together towards a shared vision for improvement.
- Leaders have not done enough to tackle poor teaching, learning and assessment. Consequently, pupils in some year groups have suffered weak teaching resulting in high levels of underachievement.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is not rigorous. Leaders do not make clear to staff what are the most important strengths to build on and weaknesses to address. Where feedback is provided to staff, it is not followed up sufficiently to ensure improvements so that pupils do not make enough progress and achievement in these year groups is woefully low.
- The local authority put in place an improvement board after the last inspection. This, and regular contact with local authority advisers, was subsequently withdrawn. The local authority brokered additional support from another source. This support has not been effective and the local authority has re-established an improvement board to support governance and increased the support provided by advisers. However, this has not had time to have an impact on the quality of leadership or teaching and learning at the school.
- Parents have a mixed view of the school. Of the parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, a significant minority did not feel that the school was well led and managed. Nearly half of those who responded said that they would not recommend the school to another parent. However, some parents were very positive about the school and the support provided for their children. Leaders have created a warm and caring environment where pupils feel safe and welcomed. A number of parents who joined the school from other countries commented on the wonderful welcome they and their children receive.
- Leaders and governors promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural values effectively. They ensure that pupils are taught tolerance and respect for others and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and offers good opportunities for pupils to learn across a range of subjects. A good range of extra-curricular clubs enhances pupils' experiences and is enjoyed by pupils. There is good take-up of dance, football and sewing clubs.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The Chair of the Governing Body and the vice-chair are both new to their roles but are supported by other governors who have held their positions for a number of years.
  - Governors do not challenge leaders sufficiently. They are too accepting of the information provided to them and do not question what they are told.
  - Governors have accepted the school's plans for spending additional funding without question. They did not challenge the decision to spend the sports premium on covering teachers' planning and assessment time because they do not understand the purpose of this funding.
  - Governors also accepted without question the school's plans for spending money provided for disadvantaged pupils. They do not know which, if any, of the uses to which it has been put have had most impact on raising pupil achievement.
  - Governors accepted the headteacher's overly generous evaluation of the school although they told inspectors that they felt it was not accurate.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school carries out rigorous checks on staff appointed to the school. They maintain careful detailed records for pupils who cause concern and follow up with appropriate agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe. All staff have received training and the

safeguarding governor visits the school regularly to check that policies and practices are robust. The vast majority of parents agree that their children feel safe in school.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate**

- Teachers' use of assessment to plan lessons is weak. Teachers do not ensure that learning meets pupils' needs. Consequently, work is too difficult for some pupils and too easy for others.
- Teachers do not understand the new assessment system used by the school and are making overly optimistic judgements of the progress that pupils are making.
- Teachers do not check frequently on pupils' understanding and only recognise that some have not understood when marking books after the lesson.
- Teachers do not adapt their plans to take account of gaps in pupils' knowledge. For example, in mathematics, teachers were teaching pupils methods for division when many pupils did not understand the basic concept of division. As a result pupils were trying to remember a method, but could not explain why it worked.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can and should be achieving within lessons. They do not make clear what pupils must achieve by the end of lessons. As a result, achievement is too low for many, and pupils are not making sufficient progress. In some cases, the quality of work seen in books currently is lower than the same pupils were achieving at the end of the last school year.
- Teachers' explanations are not always clear and as a result pupils are confused and frustrated because they do not understand what to do.
- Pupils are not encouraged to challenge themselves in most classes. Opportunities to extend their thinking are not provided and many complete tasks they find too easy.
- In a number of classes across all year groups, teachers accept pupils not listening or working productively in parts of the lessons. They do not challenge pupils' lack of attention. Consequently, some of them do not achieve as much as they are capable of.
- Teachers do not ask challenging questions which probe understanding and make pupils think more deeply.
- Teachers do not provide work to extend more-able pupils. These pupils are given initial assessment tasks which they are easily capable of completing. For example, one higher-ability pupil completed over 40 mathematics calculations which previous work showed were well within his capability. Work is not tailored to pupils' needs; pupils of differing abilities are frequently given the same work to complete.
- Teachers do not address basic errors when marking pupils' work: spelling errors and numbers and letters are not corrected. Where basic errors are addressed this does not help pupils to learn from their mistakes. For example, work was seen where every spelling error had been corrected by the teacher writing the correct spelling, but pupils were not encouraged to practise or use any of these spellings.
- Where teaching is better and learning is planned to meet pupils' needs, pupils show good attitudes to learning and are keen to learn.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils, particularly for those with additional needs.
- The teaching of phonics has been reviewed and is now structured and focused. As a result, pupils in Key Stage 1 are developing a better knowledge of the sounds letters make. However, pupils do not always apply their phonic knowledge when reading texts.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The school is not helping pupils to be confident learners who readily challenge themselves. While some opportunities are provided for pupils to develop responsibility for their learning, such as Year 6 pupils running a snack shop, pupils are not expected to do so in lessons.
- The school provides additional support for pupils who need it, such as the provision of an early-morning gym trail and a breakfast club. However, in the breakfast club adult interaction with pupils is limited and opportunities to promote pupils' personal development are not taken.

- Pupils say they feel safe in school. The school makes safeguarding a priority and ensures that pupils are kept safe. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed well. While emphasis is placed on Christian values in this church school, pupils understand the views of those from other cultures and faiths.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Teachers sometimes allow poor behaviour in lessons. For example, during the inspection, some pupils found it difficult to listen when others were reading their work or when the teacher was explaining; in one class pupils were quietly playing 'it' during a lesson and this was not picked up by the teacher.
- While the majority of pupils spoken to during the inspection said that behaviour was good, a small number said that older pupils occasionally cause problems at playtimes by pushing, and that name-calling was not always taken seriously by adults: 'They say it's just a small thing but it isn't.'
- Teachers do not always make clear what they expect from pupils or follow this up rigorously. As a result, pupils do not apply themselves in lessons, particularly when working on their own.
- The school has put in place a range of strategies to improve attendance, such as an 'attendance bear' for the class with the best attendance and following up non-attendance with letters home and meetings, but these are not having a significant impact on improving attendance at the school, which remains below average. The school does not analyse the attendance of pupil groups, and so is not aware that persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils is much higher than for others, and has not developed strategies to tackle this.
- The majority of pupils are polite and well mannered; they held doors open for inspectors and spoke to each other and adults respectfully.
- Pupils who have more challenging behaviour do not disrupt learning because they are well supported by adults.

### Outcomes for pupils

### are inadequate

- Standards have declined since the time of the last inspection and in 2015 were significantly below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. The school was perilously close to falling below the government's floor standard which is the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics, or who make expected progress in these subjects.
- The school's assessment information demonstrates that in some year groups standards at the end of 2015 were exceptionally low. In Year 4, for example, less than a fifth of pupils were meeting the expected standard in writing. Pupils' books confirm that many pupils across the school are working below the standard expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders' assessment of the progress that pupils are making is too favourable. Historic and current weaknesses in teaching have resulted in progress that is too slow for most pupils. As a result, underachievement is not being tackled.
- Due to the lack of challenge provided in lessons, more-able pupils are not achieving as well as they should and are not making rapid enough progress. As a result, the proportion of pupils who achieved above the standard expected in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 was well below the average nationally.
- The school's expectations of pupils who have English as an additional language and those who are disadvantaged are too low. Most pupils with English as an additional language are making less than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school does not recognise that pupils who are disadvantaged or have English as an additional language may also be more-able pupils, and little specific provision is put in place to help them to make more rapid progress. Where support is in place, for example for disadvantaged pupils in Year 6, this has not had any impact on accelerating progress. In fact, these pupils made less progress during this 10-week period than they should have.
- The proportion of pupils who passed the Year 1 phonics check in 2015 has declined since the last inspection and is below the national average. The school has reorganised its teaching of phonics in Years 1 and 2 so that sounds are taught in a structured way, but it is too early to see a positive impact on outcomes.

- The proportion of pupils who reached the standard expected at the end of Year 2 in 2015 in reading was below average because not enough had been done to help those pupils who had not passed the Year 1 phonics check to improve their reading skills.
- Additional teaching support provided by the deputy headteacher to address the very low standards in writing in Year 6 at the beginning of last year had some impact but did not enable the school to meet national averages in writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make expected progress because their needs are carefully identified and strategies put in place to support them in their learning.

## Early years provision

## requires improvement

- Leadership in the Early Years requires improvement because leaders do not have an accurate picture of children's capabilities when they join the school. Leaders' perceptions that the majority of children start the reception class with skills below or well below those typical of children nationally is not borne out by inspection evidence. As a result, expectations of the progress children can make are not high enough.
- The majority of children enter the reception class with skills and abilities typical for their age. By the end of the foundation stage, the proportion achieving a good level of development is similar to that found nationally.
- The early years leader recognises that she has been overly cautious in her assessments of children and that some of the assessments recorded in learning journeys by additional adults do not provide a clear enough record of children's progress over time. She has clear plans in place to address this, but they are still at an early stage and impact is not evident.
- Learning activities inside are planned to cover a wide range of areas of learning but are not always as sharply focused as they need to be to ensure that pupils are challenged. There is an appropriate mix of adult-led and independent activities offered to pupils.
- Outside, opportunities for learning are somewhat limited. During the inspection, the boys were frequently choosing to use the outdoor area but the activities provided were not well planned to develop areas of learning where boys' achievement has been lower, such as in literacy.
- Children demonstrate good social skills. They are able to sit and listen to adults and play cooperatively together. They respond to well adults and are enthusiastic about tasks. Children know the routines of the classroom and are able to follow them, for example fetching aprons prior to painting.
- Children demonstrate that they are able to work on tasks without an adult. For example, a group were using mathematical equipment and recording numbers by referring to number lines displayed on the wall and recording on their own number lines.
- The learning environment is well organised and attractive but is very limited in space for the number of children in the unit. Teachers have developed strategies to address this by planning activities where they take children out, for example to the 'Garden of Eden'.
- Adults ensure that children are kept safe and are very mindful of the welfare of pupils. Relationships between adults and children are good and children follow instructions quickly and sensibly. Behaviour is good because adults remind children of what is expected.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	115131
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10001935

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	402
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lisa Norcott
<b>Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge</b>	Pauline Batley
<b>Telephone number</b>	01206 865747
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-james-colchester.essex.sch.uk">www.st-james-colchester.essex.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@st-james-colchester.essex.sch.uk">admin@st-james-colchester.essex.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21–22 November 2013

## Information about this school

- St James' Church of England Primary School is larger than average.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Around a fifth of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs supported by a statement or educational healthcare plan is average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care) is above average.
- The school offers a breakfast club which is managed by the governing body.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all classes, playtimes and lunchtimes. Some observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books with senior leaders, school assessment information, the headteacher's evaluation of teaching and learning and a range of school documents.
- Inspectors met with a selection of parents in the playground and with some pupils from Years 5 and 6.
- Inspectors heard a small number of pupils read.
- Inspectors met with a representative from the local authority and with four members of the governing body.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, including mandatory checks made during the recruitment of new staff, arrangements for e-safety (keeping children safe online when using electronic media) and risk assessments undertaken for educational visits.
- The views of 52 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account.

## Inspection team

Maria Curry, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Olive Millington	Ofsted Inspector
Jeremy Rowe	Ofsted Inspector



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