

St Columba Church of England Primary Academy

Tewkesbury Avenue, Fareham, Hampshire PO15 6LL

Inspection dates

6–7 July 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
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 a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not ensured that pupils consistently make good progress from their starting points.
- School improvement documentation is lacking clear measurable targets. Assessment systems in school have previously not focused on the progress that different groups of pupils make.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations regarding what pupils can achieve, particularly in key stage 2. They do not set work that is challenging enough and this affects the amount of progress that pupils can make. Throughout the school, pupils do not write regularly at length.
- Leaders and governors do not effectively monitor whether gaps are rapidly closing between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates. Teachers do not effectively plan how they are going to close these gaps, especially in key stage 2.
- Subject leaders do not regularly check the progress of different groups of pupils.
- Pupils' outcomes vary across the school. They are stronger in key stage 1. From Year 2 to Year 6 pupils' progress is typically not strong and by the end of Year 6 pupils attain below the national average.
- Behaviour is variable. In Year 5, pupils do not display positive attitudes to their learning. Presentation in books can be scrappy.
- Attendance, while improving, remains below the national average.
- Leaders do not provide governors with sufficient information about pupils' progress and attainment.
- Governors do not hold leaders effectively to account. They do not carefully monitor the school's use of additional funding for the pupil premium.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is caring towards its pupils. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils are carefully taught about British values and the importance of tolerance and respect.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school.
- Children make good progress in the early years and achieve well because of good teaching.
- Those who attend the assessment resourced provision make good progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to enable more pupils to make better than expected progress in key stage 2, by:
 - ensuring that teachers have high expectations and provide challenging work that builds on what pupils already know
 - making sure that those who are identified as falling behind make accelerated progress to catch up
 - ensuring that teachers clearly demonstrate how they plan to close remaining gaps between the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils and others
 - providing effective challenge for those pupils who are most-able by ensuring that activities extend their learning and deepen their thinking
 - ensuring that pupils have the skills and opportunity to write longer pieces of work.
- Improve behaviour for learning and presentation in books by ensuring that incidents of low-level disruption, particularly in Year 5, are well managed so that a positive climate for learning is established.
- Improve leadership and management and ensure that leaders have an accurate understanding of the progress all groups of pupils are making in each year group, by:
 - rewriting documentation related to school improvement and self-evaluation, so that targets and actions have measurable success criteria based on improving pupils' progress
 - improving the attendance of all pupils
 - developing the role of subject leaders so that they regularly check on the work in pupils' books and can demonstrate to teachers what is needed to improve
 - implementing an effective tracking system, that clearly identifies to leaders where progress is weakest
 - ensuring that leaders provide governors with detailed information about pupils' attainment and progress
 - making sure that governors hold leaders more rigorously to account and fulfil their responsibilities, particularly regarding monitoring the school's use of additional funding for the pupil premium.

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

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, leaders, including the principal and governors, have not driven forward improvements at a fast enough rate. Some of the areas identified in the previous report have not been addressed. The quality of teaching and pupils' progress are still not consistently good. As a result, pupils do not attain as well as the national average by the end of key stage 2.
- School improvement documentation is not fit for purpose. It does not provide leaders with a useful plan with which to drive forward the rapid changes that need to be made. The school's self-evaluation is imprecise. The documents show that leaders have not focused sufficiently on creating a strategic direction for the school. While the school has set some targets, there is little comment on the impact of achieving a target on improvements in pupils' rates of progress.
- Subject leaders do not fulfil their roles effectively. This is because, when they check work in pupils' books, they do not scrutinise how different groups of pupils, such as those who are most-able, are progressing. Subject leaders do not identify where progress is weakest. They do not effectively demonstrate to teachers what they need to do to improve rates of progress in their subjects.
- The school is still experimenting with different systems of assessment. Previously, the school had been using a system that only provided attainment information and gave no indication on the progress that pupils had made from their starting points. As a result, leaders were unsure where progress was strongest or where it was weakest. They did not know how different groups of pupils were progressing, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. During the inspection, the school started using a new assessment system that tracked pupils' progress. However, it is too early to comment on the impact of this system.
- The school's use of additional funding for the high proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is inconsistent. There are some examples of the funding being well used and pupils' books showing expected and sometimes accelerated progress. There are other occasions when pupils' books do not show strong progress.
- The leadership of the assessment resourced provision is effective. All staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and carefully follow the weekly detailed plans that show the focus of work for each pupil. Communication between parents and the school is both regular and supportive. There are close links with a range of outside agencies who regularly visit to conduct assessments of pupils' needs. There are good arrangements for the movement of pupils either into special or mainstream school. Leaders have planned carefully to ensure that those pupils who continue into the mainstream part of this school do similar topics and so the change is usually very smooth.
- Parents are very complimentary about the school. They say that leaders have created a very supportive and nurturing environment. Parents say that teachers ensure that their children are safe and happy to come to school. Parents appreciate that staff are approachable and have a good understanding of the needs of their children. The large majority of parents would recommend the school to another parent.
- The curriculum is carefully planned and places strong emphasis on promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school makes good use of the expertise of staff. For example, one teacher who has recently returned from travelling abroad helped to develop a themed event where each class was transformed into a different country. Pupils had the opportunity to learn about the Brazilian carnival and Indian elephant decorating. Many pupils said how much they had enjoyed this experience and as one pupil said, 'It brought different countries of the world to life.' There are numerous extra-curricular activities and these have a positive impact on pupils' personal development.
- The primary physical education and sports funding is well used to provide pupils with many opportunities to take part in a wide range of sports. There are numerous competitions both within school and between schools. There are close links with a local secondary school that provide specialist tuition in a range of sports.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They learn about the importance of showing tolerance and respect to those of different faiths and cultures to their own. Pupils are very aware of the concept of democracy and know about the recent referendum regarding the European Union.
- There are various training and development opportunities for staff. The multi-academy trust has provided appropriate support to the principal. Teachers have had opportunities to learn from each other as well as through a school which has provided support to the academy since 2015. However, although there have been advances, leadership and management and the quality of teaching still require improvement.

■ The governance of the school

- Leaders do not provide governors with detailed information regarding pupils' attainment and progress. As a result, governors are hampered in their ability to hold leaders rigorously to account for the progress of all groups of pupils.
 - Governors do not monitor the school's use of additional funding effectively. They are not aware where the funding for disadvantaged pupils has the most impact or the year group where funding has not enabled pupils to catch up.
 - Governors are passionate about improving the school. They were instrumental in supporting leaders to reduce the number of exclusions in previous years. Governors are aware that there are several aspects of the school that need to improve further.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There are clear systems for checking on the suitability of adults to work with children. The new safeguarding policy provides advice on relevant issues including sexual exploitation and reporting procedures. Staff have received training on preventing radicalisation. There are good links with a range of outside agencies to ensure that pupils and families receive appropriate support.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- There is some variation in the effectiveness of teaching across the school. It is strongest in key stage 1 and Year 6 and is weakest in the rest of key stage 2. As a result, pupils' overall progress is inconsistent.
- Not enough pupils make better than expected progress because some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Work set does not carefully build on what pupils already know. Sometimes, work provided is too easy for some pupils and too hard for others, particularly those who are starting to fall behind. The impact of this is that these pupils do not make the accelerated progress that they need to catch up.
- While some teachers do ensure that those who are eligible for the pupil premium achieve well, others do not clearly demonstrate how they plan to close any remaining gaps between the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils and others.
- Some staff do not provide sufficiently challenging activities for those who are most-able. The impact of this is that pupils do not have enough opportunities to extend their learning and deepen their thinking.
- Across the school, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to write longer pieces of work. For example, in Years 3 and 4 there were limited examples of pupils writing more than a few lines.
- In key stage 1 teaching is stronger. Phonics skills (the sounds that letters make) are carefully developed. Sessions are taught by well-trained staff who encourage pupils to sound out unfamiliar words and start to read a range of books. Mathematics skills are quickly improved because teachers regularly use a variety of resources. For example, pupils learned about the measurement of weight by using scales to weigh objects.
- In the assessment resourced provision, leaders have ensured that staff are well trained and knowledgeable about the special educational needs of each pupil. Work is carefully tailored to match each pupil's ability and as a result these pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- In the rest of the school, learning support assistants carefully assist those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are often very thorough in explaining the activities that need to be done and provide appropriate encouragement.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning across the school are variable. Over half of the pupils who responded to the questionnaire felt that behaviour in lessons was only good some of the time. When asked, pupils said that some pupils show poor attitudes to their learning because they do not get on with their work or respond to the teacher's requests. This was particularly the case in Year 5.
- Some pupils do not show pride in their work or take enough care of their books. During the inspection some pupils' books in key stage 2 were seen to be scrappy and poorly presented.

- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and say that they feel safe in school. They know about the dangers they could be faced with online and show a good understanding of what to do if they have any concerns. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when using the roads and some pupils fulfil their roles as road safety officers diligently.
- Behaviour records indicate that incidents of bullying have reduced. Although some pupils reported that bullying occasionally happens, they were confident that it was usually well dealt with by staff.
- The school provides pupils with many opportunities to develop their self-confidence. Residential trips, such as to an activity centre, enable pupils to work together as a team and appreciate each other's strengths.
- The before-school breakfast club is well attended and enjoyed by pupils. It provides a welcome and nourishing start to the day.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- In lessons behaviour can be variable. In some classes pupils do not have good attitudes to their learning, however in other classes, behaviour for learning was more positive.
- Attendance, whilst improving, remains below the national average.
- The very large majority of pupils are well behaved when moving around the school. Pupils are polite and friendly to each other. In the playground, pupils were seen to be playing harmoniously together.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are usually very positive.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils' outcomes require improvement. In 2015, pupils' performed below the national average in key stage 2 in all subjects. Progress from pupils' starting points is inconsistent and information from current pupils' books shows that this continues to be the case.
- The gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in school have closed in key stage 1. In 2015, they performed better than their classmates. However, disadvantaged pupils make very variable progress across key stage 2 and last year there were some wide differences in their attainment when compared to other pupils nationally. Evidence in pupils' books shows that, whilst some gaps are starting to close, there is still some way to go to close both progress and attainment gaps in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In key stage 1 in 2015, those who were most-able performed above the national average in writing but below in reading and mathematics. In key stage 2, the proportions who gained the higher levels were below the national average in all subjects. Current pupils' books show that few are reaching their full potential because teachers do not match work well enough to pupils' abilities.
- Those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities made significantly less progress than other pupils nationally last year. Progress seen during the inspection was still variable but there was evidence of some pupils making good progress due to the effective interventions of learning support assistants.
- The proportion of children who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics reading check has been steadily improving since the previous inspection. Early indications for this year suggest that this trend is set to continue.
- Pupils achieve well in science and they are encouraged to think scientifically and solve problems. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 3 and 4 spoke with delight about their recent trip to a local airport and the letter they had subsequently received asking them to investigate which runway surface had the most grip for the aeroplane tyres. They enjoyed experimenting to find the perfect surface.
- Pupils in the assessment resourced provision often make good progress from their starting points. This is because work set by staff is well matched to their individual needs.

Early years provision

is good

- Most children start the Reception year with skills and abilities that are below those that are typical for their age, particularly in language and communication. Children make good progress due to the fact that leaders and staff take time to assess carefully what each child knows and what they need to learn next.

- Parents are very supportive and particularly enjoy contributing to their child's learning journey by sharing 'wow' moments of developmental milestones from home. They said how pleased they were with the often individual attention that their children receive, and they commented that this has helped their children to make good progress during the Reception year.
- By the time children leave Reception in 2015, a similar proportion to that found nationally reached a good level of development. Many demonstrate particular strengths in number, technology, health and self-care and reading. As a result, children are very well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Accurate teaching in phonics enables children to get off to a good start to understanding the sounds that letters make. Children read a range of books and parents praise the useful support they have been given to help develop their children's reading skills at home.
- The teaching of writing is effective. Children are encouraged to write because of the exciting opportunities that they are given. For example, during the inspection children were making potions that had the ability to change humans into creatures such as frogs. Children were spellbound when watching the teaching assistant apparently change into a frog. Despite some initial reticence, children realised that the only way to record the ingredients of this powerful potion was to write them down.
- Those children who are of Reception age who attend the assessment resourced provision often join Reception children so as to further develop their speaking skills and explore the environment.
- Children are safe and happy. They behave well and usually share resources carefully. Teachers and other adults ensure that safeguarding and welfare needs are met.

School details

Unique reference number	138509
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10012332

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	174
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Brewerton
Principal	Jane Hoggarth-Allen
Telephone number	01329 843226
Website	stcolumbaacademy.co.uk
Email address	J.Hoggarth@stcolumba.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 June 2014

Information about this school

- St Columba is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years are taught in one full-time reception class.
- A very large majority of the pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is much higher than that found in most schools. The pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government for those pupils eligible for free school meals in the last six years, pupils who have been looked after continuously for one day or more and those pupils who have been adopted from care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average.
- The school has a specially resourced provision. It admits up to 10 pupils between the Reception to Year 2 year groups. The facility provides an assessment of pupils' skills and abilities with the aim of ascertaining whether mainstream or special school is the appropriate route for the pupils. Pupils attending have a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities including speech and language needs or autistic spectrum disorders. Currently, there are six Reception aged children and two Year 2 pupils on roll.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs a breakfast club before school.
- The school converted to become an academy in September 2012, when it joined the Portsmouth and Winchester Diocesan Academy Trust. There are currently three primary schools in this multi-academy trust.
- The school has been supported by the Pioneer Teaching Alliance Primary School since March 2015.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. There were 10 lessons and part lessons visited many of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils and inspectors looked at work in books and listened to some pupils reading. Inspectors considered the 56 responses to the online pupil questionnaire. There were also informal discussions with pupils at breaktime regarding what it was like to be a pupil at this school.
- Inspectors took account of 18 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and also spoke to parents at the end of the school day.
- The views expressed by eight members of staff in their responses to the online questionnaire were considered.
- There were meetings with staff and those responsible for governance. There was also a meeting with a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation and policies including the school improvement plan. Information about the performance of the school in comparison with other schools nationally was considered along with documents about pupils' current attainment and progress. Documents checking the quality of teaching and learning and records relating to behaviour, attendance, child protection and safeguarding were also examined.

Inspection team

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