

St John's Church of England Primary School

Maple Road, Penge, London SE20 8HU

Inspection dates

7–8 March 2017

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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not make good progress from the time they begin school until the end of Year 6, particularly in writing and mathematics. Although achievement is improving, not enough pupils achieve standards expected of them.
- Middle leaders have not implemented actions consistently to improve the school's performance. This has resulted in variable rates of progress for pupils in some year groups, across subjects.
- Pupils do not demonstrate progress in mathematics consistently because they are not given opportunities to practise and consolidate mathematical skills.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough, and teachers do not use assessment information well enough to ensure good progress.
- The teaching of writing is not consistently challenging. Consequently, the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, do not make rapid progress to exceed expected standards.
- Too often, pupils' writing does not meet expected standards because they do not apply their spelling, punctuation, and grammar skills when writing extensively.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have created successfully a caring, safe and secure school, underpinned by its Christian ethos.
- Pupils make good progress in reading because the teaching of reading is effective, including the teaching of phonics.
- Leadership and teaching in the early years are effective and lead to children making good rates of progress. Disadvantaged children make good progress in the early years.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of enrichment activities. These help pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, including their tolerance and respect for others.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching of writing and mathematics, so that pupils make at least as much progress as they do in reading, by teachers:
 - giving pupils opportunities to practise and consolidate their mathematical skills
 - ensuring that pupils use ambitious vocabulary when writing
 - persistently demanding that pupils apply their spelling, punctuation and grammar skills when writing extensively.
- Stretch and challenge the most able, including the most able disadvantaged, so that a high proportion of them exceed expected standards in writing.
- Improve the effectiveness of middle leaders by:
 - making sure that the actions they take are having an impact on accelerating the progress pupils are making
 - ensuring that the initiatives they are driving are implemented consistently to achieve good or better quality of teaching and learning in all year groups.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The executive headteacher and the head of school are determined leaders who have worked successfully to build a capable senior leadership team. Despite the challenges posed by three consecutive changes of academy trusts, they have established a positive culture which has the capacity to drive improvement in all areas of school life.
- The school has had significant changes in staffing in the last three years. The school leaders have worked hard to mitigate the adverse effects of this, identifying and addressing gaps for individual pupils and groups. However, the impact of this work is not yet consistent across the school, and across subjects.
- Leadership and management are not yet good. This is because the actions school leaders have taken have not yet ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently good and, as a consequence, pupils do not achieve as well as they should at the end of either key stage 1 or key stage 2.
- Leaders have not secured consistently good outcomes for current pupils in writing and mathematics. The quality of teaching is too variable.
- The effectiveness of middle leaders in identifying where improvement is needed and in driving initiatives to bring about improvement varies in quality and impact. They are not effective in ensuring that the actions they take improve the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, they are not able to secure better outcomes for pupils. Senior leaders know that middle leadership needs to be developed, and they are using the trust's professional development package to address this.
- Recent action taken by leaders has led to some improvements in teaching. The progress of disadvantaged pupils, pupils who are falling behind and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is accelerating.
- Many parents appreciate what the school does for their children, particularly in providing high-quality support and care. However, some parents have expressed that communication could be better. They say that, sometimes, information is passed on at the last minute.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Through assemblies and teaching, the school promotes resilience, perseverance and independence successfully. Opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of British values are carefully mapped out in the curriculum.
- The school offers a broad, balanced and exciting curriculum. Pupils benefit from specialist teachers providing lessons in modern foreign languages, music and sports. Pupils express enjoyment when engaged in these subjects. The curriculum is complemented by educational visits, themed weeks and a variety of sporting activities.
- The pupil premium funding is used to provide additional support for pupils, some of which is effective. Leaders check the standards attained by pupils eligible for the funding. However, they do not take enough care in ensuring that the funding is as

effective as possible in helping the most able disadvantaged exceed expected standards.

Governance of the school

- The academy trust is providing sharp and timely challenge to school leaders, particularly around what they identify as areas for improvement. They check that school leaders' evaluation of their improvement work is accurate and realistic. The trustees make a significant contribution in setting aspirational targets for leaders at all levels.
- The academy trust has provided high-quality professional development for senior leaders and other staff. They create opportunities for the senior leaders to collaborate with their counterparts from seven other primary schools within the trust.
- The board of trustees plays a highly effective role in developing the school's provision. They have relevant expertise and use this very well in their work. They are firm in their challenge to leaders, keeping the achievement of pupils at the core of everything they do.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Teachers and school leaders take swift action to follow up concerns in school, with parents and with external agencies where appropriate. Pupils feel safe in school and understand about a range of potential risks, for example when using social media. Pupils are well aware of how to use online social networks safely.
- All checks on adults' suitability are made and recorded on the single central register. School leaders comply with the requirements of safer recruitment.
- The record-keeping to keep pupils safe meets statutory requirements, is up to date and is administered thoroughly. The trust carefully monitors the school's safeguarding practice. The school's designated safeguarding lead reports to the trust's operations director who ensures that safeguarding procedures are consistently robust and effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable between subjects and classes across key stages 1 and 2. Teachers' expectations are not high enough to ensure consistently good outcomes, especially for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged.
- The teaching of phonics has improved. As a result, more pupils are beginning Year 2 better prepared to progress further in their reading. Pupils display fluency when reading, using phonic knowledge to decode unfamiliar words. Both pupils who lag behind and also those who struggle in their reading receive effective support so they catch up with their peers.
- Reading record books show that pupils read at home regularly. Older pupils demonstrate a love for reading. The most able pupils, including the most able

disadvantaged, receive books which stretch and challenge them.

- In mathematics, some teachers are beginning to provide pupils with opportunities to practise and consolidate skills to achieve mastery in mathematics. Pupils' mathematics books show they sometimes engage in activities aimed at developing their mathematical reasoning. This is variable across the school.
- The standard of work in mathematics generally is not challenging. Some errors in number work are not always followed up, and misconceptions are not addressed promptly. Lessons are often not planned in ways that allow pupils to demonstrate progress. They tend to jump from one topic to another.
- School leaders have introduced recent changes to improve the teaching of mathematics. These changes aim to ensure that pupils know basic number facts well and that they can use these facts to solve mathematical problems. Some teachers need more support to be fully secure in the delivery of these changes.
- The quality of writing across the school remains inconsistent. Pupils do not always use ambitious vocabulary to make their writing interesting to their readers. While older pupils use sophisticated sentence structure in their English skills books, this does not always transfer to their more extensive writing.
- Teachers make good use of support staff, such as teaching assistants. This is having an impact on the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote personal development and welfare is good. The school's Christian values contribute to pupils' personal development. One child said, 'we do acts of worship daily by learning about God, and building our faith helps us to be kind to everyone.' These values are reinforced regularly by the local vicar who leads weekly assemblies in school.
- Different groups of pupils say they feel safe. Pupils have been taught how to keep safe while using the internet, and they were keen to tell the inspectors the strategies they use when they have any worries or concerns. Incidents of bullying are rare and are dealt with very quickly on those occasions when it is reported.
- School leaders give pupils plenty of opportunities to work with various charities. The school has an established link with the Stephen Jota Centre and Orphanage in Uganda. Pupils and their families recently raised funds and bought a cow, which now provides milk for the children in the centre.
- Classrooms and corridors reflect how the school celebrates diversity. Doors are adorned with examples of writing representative of the various languages they speak, and older pupils write profiles of countries from where they have come.
- Pupils understand the school's ethos and values very well. They are reminded of these in assemblies and through activities in class. Pupils often talk about the importance of trust, commitment and forgiveness. These values are evident in the positive

relationships which exist between adults and pupils in this school.

- Pupils take their responsibilities very seriously. The school council advises their school leaders regularly on what they think works well in school and how some things can be improved. Quite recently, they recommended using key stage 2 pupils as play leaders to help younger pupils during their playtimes.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils display positive attitudes to learning. They respond to adults instructions promptly, and they engage actively in class activities. Occasionally, a few pupils lose focus in lessons and their attention drifts. They quickly re-engage once adults intervene promptly.
- The school's system of logging behaviour incidents is effective, because pupils are given opportunities to reflect on their actions. They are then supported to develop strategies to cope with similar incidents in the future.
- Attendance is improving. School leaders, supported by the local authority's education welfare officer, work effectively with families. This partnership work is making a difference to the overall attendance figures. The school works with a wide range of external agencies, including medical practitioners and social care workers, to improve the attendance of vulnerable pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The achievement of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, was lower than in previous years, particularly in writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils making expected progress in these subjects was well below national in 2016. Similarly at the end of key stage 1, too few pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Due to the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, the progress of current pupils across the school remains variable. There are recent indications that younger pupils are making up lost ground and making more progress, when compared to pupils in Year 5 and Year 6.
- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils made less progress at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 than other pupils in all areas. They are now making similar progress with other pupils. They make better progress in reading than in writing and mathematics. The differences between disadvantaged and other pupils are diminishing across the school.
- Expectations for the most able pupils, including for the most able disadvantaged, are too low and they are not achieving as well as they could. Activities do not take account of what these pupils already know, can do and understand.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make expected progress over time, from their starting points. The quality of additional support in lessons is starting to have a positive impact on improving progress for these pupils across the school. Teaching assistants understand the progress these pupils are making and are

equipped better to support next steps in learning.

- Pupils enjoy reading and are well supported both in school and also by parents at home to develop their reading skills. Pupils use different strategies to read difficult words, including the use of their phonic knowledge, context and/or picture clues.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the national screening check for phonics at the end of year 1 was lower than the national average last year. The school is now giving considerable focus to phonics development and the impact is clear. Teachers and support staff received additional and up-to-date training on the delivery of phonics. As a result, there is strong evidence that more pupils in Year 1 are on track to pass the check, compared to last year's results.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the early years with skills and abilities below those typical of their age. Current pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are making good progress and a high proportion are on track to reach a good level of development. Consequently, children are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Children in the early years benefit from established routines, which enable them to engage confidently in the well-resourced environment. They benefit from a wide range of stimulating activities, both indoors and outside, which allows them to acquire and practice their skills. In the role play area, for example, children pretended to be doctors talking to a patient. Children's work shows that in the past, they extended this by writing a prescription.
- Children's behaviour is consistently good in both classes. They feel safe in the nurturing and well-ordered environment. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous, and records indicate they are followed by staff. The children are supervised by well-qualified staff. Risk assessment in the setting is robust.
- Adults support children effectively to develop their vocabulary. For example, when working with construction blocks, they were encouraged to use the language of directions, such as 'above', 'below', 'on' and 'in'.
- Children's language development is planned carefully using their familiar interests, including in their immediate environment. In one session, a child brought a flower he found on his way to school, because he said he wanted to talk about the signs of spring. Teachers used this opportunity to encourage children to talk about, and understand, the world around them.
- Children demonstrate independent skills when engaged in activities, and they are able to talk about their learning. After an adult-led mathematics activity, one of the children stayed on and chose to work out some subtraction sentences using counters and a number line. She did this independently, thinking aloud, and working out the answers using resources she has chosen herself.

School details

Unique reference number	140648
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	10023574

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	260
Appropriate authority	The Aquinas Church of England Education Trust
Chair	Simon Parker (chair of the Trust Board) Kathy Griffiths (chief executive officer)
Headteacher	Laura Pearson (executive headteacher) Sharon Rutherford (head of school)
Telephone number	020 8778 5066
Website	www.st-johns.bromley.sch.uk/
Email address	admin@st-johns.bromley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- This is an average-sized primary school; the majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The school is expanding to two forms of entry. There are two classes in Reception, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 4. There is one class each for Year 3, Year 5 and Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is similar to the national average.

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average.
- During the past three years, the school had been led by three different academy trusts. The school is now part of The Aquinas Church of England Education Trust, which consists of one secondary and eight primary schools.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school, members of the senior leadership team, members of the board of trustees, including the trust's chief executive officer, and staff.
- The inspectors met with a group of pupils, and listened to pupils reading. These pupils were from various year groups and of different abilities.
- The inspectors took account of responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and spoke with parents when they brought their children to school in the morning.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work and a range of documents, including the school's arrangements for safeguarding, performance management procedures and pupils' attendance data.
- Inspectors also looked at information about pupils' progress and attainment.
- The inspectors carried out observations in lessons, most of them jointly with school leaders.

Inspection team

Edison David, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Meena Walia	Ofsted Inspector
Martina Martin	Ofsted Inspector

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