

# The Clinton Church of England Primary School

Merton, Okehampton, Devon EX20 3EQ

## Inspection dates

21–22 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- The overall effectiveness of the school has declined since the previous inspection. The high turnover of teaching staff and lack of leadership capacity has derailed school improvement.
- Governors have failed to hold senior leaders to account and have not fulfilled all of their statutory duties, including safeguarding. Middle leadership is non-existent.
- Pupils' outcomes are inadequate. Progress is weak across a wide range of subjects including writing and is especially weak in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is inadequate. Teachers' assessment of pupils' learning is inaccurate. Consequently, work set does not match pupils' needs and abilities.
- Pupils' low-level disruption in lessons hinders learning.
- The curriculum is too narrow. Teachers provide little opportunity for pupils to develop their fundamental skills of reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have not used the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively. As a result, these pupils underachieve and their self-esteem diminishes.
- The most able pupils do not receive the challenge they need. Consequently, their progress stalls and they do not meet the higher standards they are capable of.
- The early years provision is inadequate. Over time, children's learning has suffered from weak teaching. Children are not prepared for Year 1.
- Leaders and managers have failed to create a safe environment for pupils.

### The school has the following strengths

- Outcomes in reading are improving as a result of leaders' actions.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is accurate. The executive headteacher has not shied away from difficult decisions and was proactive in seeking support from the local authority.
- External support has begun to raise teachers' expectations.
- Pupils' standards of presentation and handwriting have improved.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of 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?

- Leaders and governors should ensure that safeguarding is effective, including in the early years, by:
  - meeting all statutory duties of recruitment and the recording and reporting of concerns
  - developing a safeguarding culture throughout the school so that pupils feel confident to share their concerns
  - governors checking that leaders fulfil their statutory responsibilities.
- Urgently improve leadership and governance by:
  - rapidly securing a stable leadership structure and skilled teaching staff, including in the early years
  - ensuring that additional funding is well targeted to meet the range of different needs of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that outcomes for these pupils improve considerably and are carefully evaluated
  - ensuring that the curriculum covers a wide range of subjects and that it prepares pupils better for life in modern Britain.
- Urgently improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
  - establishing routines and procedures so that pupils can share their concerns
  - reducing low-level disruption in lessons.
- Urgently improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - establishing a robust system for checking the quality of teachers' performance
  - implementing a structured programme of training to support teachers' subject knowledge
  - ensuring that teachers' assessment is accurate and it is used to plan activities that are matched to pupils' needs.
- Urgently improve pupils' outcomes and insist that:
  - teachers raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve, including in the early years
  - the most able pupils are given activities that engage and challenge them.

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

### Inadequate

- Over time, senior leaders have not established effective leadership. A high turnover in staff has left the school bereft of leaders beyond the executive headteacher. The school is too reliant on external support.
- Leaders have failed to promote equality of opportunity for staff and pupils. Pupils have not received the support they need. Staff have been deprived of high-quality professional development. For example, respondents to the staff questionnaire expressed concerns that they are not sufficiently trained or supported in managing some pupils' specific needs. This is borne out by the weak support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The curriculum is poorly taught. Pupils are not developing skills across a wide range of subjects. The curriculum does not prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education as their reading, writing and mathematical skills are not good enough.
- British values, spiritual, moral, social and cultural education are not promoted effectively. Not enough is done to support pupils' understanding of tolerance and respect for others. This is reflected in the large number of poor behavioural incidents that occur in the school.
- Over time, leaders' use of the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils has been ineffective. Governors have not checked rigorously the impact of actions taken and how well the money spent is improving pupils' learning and personal development. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils do not make enough progress.
- Supported by the national leader of education, the executive headteacher has not shied away from difficult decisions and has challenged underperformance. However, this has not led to improved outcomes for pupils. Staff turnover has slowed plans for improvement.
- Governors, local authority and diocesan leaders all noted the difficulties in recruiting high-calibre teachers in the locality. In the absence of experienced applicants, leaders have appointed newly qualified teachers. These teachers have been poorly served because of the lack of leadership capacity.
- There is no capacity for improvement. A temporary arrangement with another school has provided a special educational needs coordinator to work for one day per week across the two schools in the federation. Although well intentioned, the level of support is woefully inadequate to bring about the extent of improvement required in the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school's infrastructure is not fit for purpose. Poor teaching is entrenched. The headteacher specifically requested support to address the serious areas for improvement that she had identified. In December 2015, the local authority brokered an extensive menu of support for the school to bolster leadership. Although local and specialist leaders' work has made some small steps of improvement, these advances are superficial. The failings of the school are widespread.

- The local authority and diocese worked together to seek more permanent solutions to the school's extensive failings. Consequently, a management partnership with another school is now in place. The new executive headteacher has a good track record of improvement and a strong team of capable leaders to hand.
- The physical education and sports funding is supporting pupils' interest and engagement in sporting activities. There are a range of after-school clubs which are well attended. However, the school has misused funding to teach minimum requirements of the national curriculum such as swimming. This is against the Department for Education guidelines.
- The majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and those who spoke to the inspector were supportive of the school. However, a minority expressed concerns relating to communication and leadership of the school.
- The school should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

### **Governance of the school**

- Over time, the work of the governors has been inadequate. As a result, the school has declined significantly over time. The inability to fill vacancies in the governing body has thwarted the governing body's effectiveness. The responsibility has fallen to a few committed governors to try to get the school back on track. They have failed to achieve this.
- The governing body have begun to attend to the actions arising from the governance audit commissioned by the local authority. However, there is little capacity within the governing body and areas for improvement are numerous.
- Governors have not fulfilled their statutory duties. For example, safeguarding is ineffective and welfare requirements are not met.
- Governors have failed to hold the headteacher to account for the decline in pupils' outcomes. The recent support of a national leader of governance (NLG) has supported governors in being clearer about the performance of the school in comparison to national averages. However, governors see the recent glimmers of improvement in a too positive light.
- Governors have failed to ensure that the expenditure of additional funding has a positive impact on the progress and well-being of disadvantaged children and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Governors have started to undertake audits of the school's work. Recently, a governor with responsibility for health and safety reviewed the school's records of accidents. However, there has been no change in practice. Subsequently, there is no decline in reported accidents.
- Governors have been seeking partnerships to create further capacity for leadership. They have willingly worked with the local authority and the diocese in seeking a solution but it has been too long coming.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Systems for reporting and recording safeguarding concerns relating to pupils and children are not fit for purpose. Although leaders have provided the appropriate training, the approach to passing on concerns is inconsistent. Records reflect a similarly slack approach.
- The processes for staff appointments do not meet the Department for Education requirements. Records are muddled. Leaders have not carried out sufficient checks during the recruitment of staff and volunteers to make sure that adults are suitable to work with children. For example, some members of staff started work before their safeguarding checks came through. No risk assessments are in place for this. Other appointments have been made with incomplete applications and references.
- On occasions, bullying and racist incidents go unreported. Pupils have little faith in adults and appear resigned to this, reluctantly saying adults 'do their best'. When pupils have reported incidents, adults have been negligent in following procedures.
- Despite these shortcomings, the inspector observed some strong relationships and many happy children.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Inadequate

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time has been weak. Significant changes in teaching staff in this small setting have had a negative impact on outcomes for pupils.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is weak and their use of assessment information poor. They do not have a clear understanding of national curriculum expectations. Consequently, they plan work for pupils which is sometimes too easy or too hard so pupils make inadequate progress. Too many pupils either struggle and give up, or become bored and lose interest.
- Teaching for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities does not meet their needs. Effective teaching assistants in key stage 2 provide pupils with high-quality support. This helps to close gaps in their learning. However, teaching does not take enough account of this work when pupils return to class. Consequently, pupils cannot build on their new learning. Pupils do not make the gains they need to catch up and their confidence falters. Consequently, they make inadequate progress.
- The teaching of writing has improved in recent months. Teachers have received external support positively and their subject knowledge has improved. They are setting work which is better matched to national curriculum expectations. However, the legacy of previously weak teaching has led to significant gaps in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills.
- The teaching of phonics is weak. External support has not been effective in tackling weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge. As a result, pupils in Reception and Years 1, 2 and 3 have gaps in their knowledge and skills. This hinders their fluency in reading

and writing.

- Poor teaching of mathematics has led to inadequate outcomes. Teachers are responding to the additional training provided by the specialist leader. They are planning more opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills. However, as with writing, the legacy of underachievement is substantial.
- Pupils are set a range of homework activities, in particular, to support the development of their English skills. At key stage 1, teachers do not monitor home reading effectively. They do not target reading support where it is most needed. Consequently, pupils' progress stalls and the gaps in their reading skills widen.
- The teaching of reading is leading to some signs of improved outcomes for pupils at key stage 2. Pupils say that they enjoy the quizzes that test their understanding of the books they have read. Boys who have previously struggled with reading are motivated to read more often.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Inadequate

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. The shortcomings in safeguarding mean that the school's work to promote pupils' welfare is ineffective.
- A few pupils expressed concerns about feeling safe. There is no common understanding among the school community of what constitutes bullying. Some pupils described prejudice bullying such as racist incidents. Consequently, pupils are left vulnerable.
- After emotional outbursts experienced by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, staff do not do enough to ensure that pupils' dignity is intact and that those around them feel safe.
- Although there is some effective multi-agency working for those pupils most at risk, work to keep the rest of the pupils safe is ineffective. Although relationships between adults and pupils are warm and friendly, there are no clear systems in place for pupils to share their concerns. Consequently, some pupils are unclear about who to go to if they are worried. They say they keep their concerns to themselves.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. For a few pupils, the behaviour management is not an effective deterrent. Consequently, pupils repeat unwanted behaviours and disrupt their learning and that of others.
- The majority of pupils are polite and kind to each other. They told the inspector that they 'feel sad when children do not behave well'.
- Leaders have sought advice in managing a small number of pupils whose behaviour can be challenging. However, not all staff and parents have benefited from the implications of this training. Consequently, the support in place for the most vulnerable

pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities does not take this advice into account. The extra government funding received for these pupils is not used effectively.

- The number of recorded incidents of poor behaviour is high. In addition, pupils' comments suggest that more incidents go unrecorded.
- Recent improvements in pupils' handwriting and presentation reflects that they take some pride in their learning. However, where teachers fail to match work to pupils' needs, pupils lose focus and distract others from learning.
- Leaders have been effective in sustaining good levels of attendance in school. The number of pupils who are persistently absent from school is below the national average and is reducing. Absence for these pupils has related to holidays in term time. The headteacher has followed the appropriate protocols in dealing with this.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Inadequate

- Very small cohort sizes make national comparisons difficult. However, in 2016, progress at the end of Year 6 represented some of the poorest in the country across reading, writing and mathematics.
- There has been a three-year decline in outcomes at the end of the early years foundation stage. Few children are well prepared for Year 1.
- There has also been a three-year decline in the number of children meeting the expected standard in phonics. In addition, pupils' weak phonics has been a significant barrier in supporting their progress in reading and writing.
- Last year, pupils in Year 2 underachieved in reading, writing and mathematics. In particular, pupils who had lower starting points made poor progress.
- The most able pupils make insufficient progress. Historically, few pupils have achieved at the highest levels.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make enough progress.
- Differences between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and that of their peers nationally in reading, writing and mathematics are large and are growing.
- Although too few of the current pupils are working at age-related standards in reading, there are encouraging signs of progress. However, the difference between boys' and girls' reading ability is significant. Too few boys enjoy reading and many are far less competent readers than the girls.
- In writing, pupils make insufficient progress. In particular, pupils' spelling and grammar is poor. Too many pupils in Years 5 and 6 are still learning to spell words that they should have mastered in Years 2, 3 and 4. Consequently, too few pupils are working at age-related expectations.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is inadequate. Workbooks show that pupils have few strategies for solving problems. Their weak knowledge of number facts slows down their calculation skills. As a result, too few are working at age-related expectations.

- Outcomes in other curriculum areas are inadequate. The curriculum is not well planned to encompass a range of subjects. It does not build on pupils' prior knowledge, understanding and skills and does not prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.

## Early years provision

## Inadequate

- The shortcomings in safeguarding apply equally to the early years. Risk assessments do not reach beyond a purely administrative purpose. When minor injuries occur, adults do not take measures to ensure these are not repeated. Although records are kept, leaders do not analyse them to consider how the learning environment can be made safer for the children.
- Teaching is poor. Children do not make good progress from their starting points on entry to the early years.
- There has been a three-year decline in the number of children reaching a good level of development. Consequently, children are not well prepared for Year 1.
- There is no early years leader in Clinton or across the federation. Early years has not received the same level of support as elsewhere in the school. Although the headteacher has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the early years there has been no capacity to make improvements.
- The curriculum on offer in the early years falls far short of meeting children's needs. Adults' assessment of children's skills is inaccurate. Consequently, staff do not plan learning activities to build on what the children know, can do and understand. Expectations are too low. Consequently, progress is too slow, the curriculum is weak and too few children achieve well.
- The range of activities and resources available do not help children to sustain interest and concentration. Consequently, children flit between activities. At worst, when children lose interest they play inappropriately with equipment, for example kicking and throwing play bricks.
- Staff are kind and encouraging to the children. They help to keep children focused. However, when they leave an activity, children do not sustain interest. The quality of adult interactions does not develop and extend children's communication.
- Staff have not received adequate training to improve the quality of teaching and assessment. In addition, they do not receive sufficient guidance to support the management of challenging behaviour. Children's safety and well-being are compromised.
- Parents say that staff are approachable. The majority say that their children are happy. A few expressed concerns about the inconsistency of staffing. These parents say that 'things are more settled this year'.



## School details

Unique reference number	113452
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10033316

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	37
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Acting chair	Alison Atton
Executive headteacher	Rachel Brennan
Telephone number	01805 603357
Website	<a href="http://clintonprimaryschooldevon.co.uk">http://clintonprimaryschooldevon.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:headteacher@clinton.devon.sch.uk">headteacher@clinton.devon.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	July 2013

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school. It forms part of The Tarka Federation in partnership with Dolton Church of England Primary School in the Diocese of Exeter.
- The federation came under a management partnership in the same week as the inspection took place. The new partnership is with St Helen's Church of England Primary School, Abbotsham. The headteacher of St Helen's has become the executive headteacher. The current executive headteacher has resigned from her position and is due to leave the school at the end of this term.
- The Clinton Church of England Primary School Pre-School is managed by the school's governing body and forms part of the Tarka Federation. The pre-school operates from one of the school's classrooms.

- The school has been receiving support from a local leader of education and two specialist leaders of education from Beaford Primary School since January 2016. The school has also received support from a national leader of education from the South West Schools' Federation since January 2017.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
- The number of pupils who start or leave the school other than at the usual starting or leaving point is greater than the national average.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum on its website.
- The school has too few pupils who took part in the 2016 key stage 2 tests to make comparisons with the current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited classes, and looked at pupils' books from subjects across the curriculum and at evidence of children's work in the early years. The executive headteacher joined the inspector for almost all of these activities.
- Meetings were held with the current executive headteacher, the new executive headteacher, two members of the governing body, the local leader of education and the two specialist leaders of education. The inspector also conducted telephone conversations with the national leader of education, the diocesan director of education, a local authority representative and the acting chair of the governing body.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including information on pupils' attainment and progress, the school's self-evaluation, plans for improvement, minutes of the governing board and records relating to safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspector spoke with many pupils during visits to classes and at play and lunchtimes to hear their views of the school. The inspector also heard six pupils read.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the end of the school day and took account of the five responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspector also took account of the two responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Tracy Hannon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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