

St Mary's CofE Primary School

Lansdown View, Timsbury, Bath, Somerset BA2 0JR

Inspection dates

8–9 November 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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching across the school despite some recent and rapid improvements. As a result, some pupils do not make consistently strong progress.
- Some pupils in both key stages are catching up from weak teaching in the past which has left them with gaps in their skills and knowledge.
- Assessment is not used consistently well enough by teachers to take into account information about pupils' prior learning. This means that the work teachers set does not routinely help pupils to improve or sufficiently challenge pupils. As a result, some pupils across the school do not reach the standards expected of them.
- Pupils do not routinely use calculation skills to solve problems in a range of contexts. Although they are developing fluency in mathematics, this is not consistently secure.
- Some pupils have low attendance, which means that they are missing out on all the learning experiences that the school has to offer.
- Some subject leaders are still developing their skills in monitoring the quality of teaching. They do not yet have a secure understanding of how well pupils are achieving in all subjects. This restricts their ability to support improvement.
- The curriculum does not enable pupils to develop reading, writing and mathematics well enough across a range of subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- The school has improved in many respects since the last inspection. The teaching of phonics is a notable example.
- The headteacher and senior leaders, supported by the local authority, understand the school's priorities and have worked tirelessly to address weak teaching. This is helping pupils to make better progress.
- Leaders and teachers are committed to pupils' welfare and provide well-targeted emotional and social support for pupils who need it. This helps pupils to participate positively in their learning.
- Teaching, provision and leadership in the early years are good so that children are well prepared for Year 1.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - continuing to develop assessment so that leaders can accurately identify when they need to intervene to improve teaching
 - developing middle leaders' monitoring skills so that leaders can assure themselves that pupils are making strong progress in all subjects
 - continuing to improve attendance for pupils with higher absence rates.
- Improve the consistency of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - securing pupils' skills in mathematics so that they can fluently solve problems in a range of contexts
 - ensuring that support for all pupils who need to catch up is precisely targeted to help them reach the highest possible standards.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher, along with other leaders and governors well supported by the local authority, has a clear understanding of how the school needs to improve. Leaders have taken decisive steps to address weak teaching, although until relatively recently their actions have not had sufficient impact. Although leaders' actions are now paying dividends and pupils are making better progress, it is too soon to see sustained evidence of impact. This is because several pupils are still catching up from previous weak teaching. Teaching is therefore not yet consistently good.
- The headteacher and governors have only relatively recently been able to share leadership responsibilities more widely. This means that some leaders' monitoring of pupils' progress in subjects across the curriculum is not fully established. This restricts leaders' ability to check how well pupils are consolidating skills in a range of subjects.
- Historically, senior leaders did not use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils consistently well to ensure that disadvantaged pupils progressed as well as others. Currently, this funding is used more precisely and effectively. Leaders recognise that disadvantaged pupils are often doubly vulnerable because many disadvantaged pupils also have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Leaders ensure that they clearly identify the specific additional support pupils need and use funding appropriately to put this in place. Case studies reveal that leaders' actions are diminishing gaps in pupils' achievement and many disadvantaged pupils make strong progress.
- Leaders are fully committed to ensuring that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are included in all learning activities. They have well-developed plans and allocate additional funding appropriately. The vast majority of parents are very appreciative of the support their children receive. Effective support has led to notable improvements in pupils' confidence and attitudes to learning which are helping them to make better progress. However, achievement overall for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not consistently good. Leaders recognise that this is because many pupils have complex needs. They are aware that it will be essential to continue to provide support so pupils can catch up.
- Leaders make appropriate use of the physical education and sport premium. The assistant headteacher, who leads physical education, has a clear vision and is keen to make sport more attractive to pupils. He has audited provision, developed focused plans and allocated funding appropriately to improve teaching and develop teachers' confidence in teaching a range of skills. He has also developed new clubs for gymnastics, dance, football and cycling, which encourage pupils to participate in the wider curriculum.
- While most parents and staff who responded to surveys are happy with the school's work, a minority of parents and some staff are dissatisfied with the extent to which leaders communicate and support them.
- Pupils have effective opportunities to develop their understanding of fundamental British values and leaders link these to the school's values, which include the promotion

of courage, responsibility and perseverance. Pupils gain a good understanding of the importance of rules by developing class charters. They learn about democracy by writing manifestos, taking part in elections and, for example, by visiting the Houses of Parliament.

- Pupils are well supported to secure their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through nurture groups, French lessons, residential trips to Weymouth, theatre visits and opportunities to participate in djembe drumming. Pupils are helped to understand their place in modern Britain by celebrating Black History Month and they learn about the different religions in Britain today.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher regularly visit lessons and have meetings with teachers to check on the quality of teaching. They are taking appropriate action to support teachers to improve teaching that does not meet high enough expectations, or that does not secure good progress for pupils.
- Leadership responsibilities are now shared more widely. The deputy headteacher and recently appointed assistant headteacher are ambitious and motivated, which helps them to support the headteacher in driving school improvement. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have created clear plans which help them to take action to improve the consistency of teaching.
- Leaders have worked closely with the local authority and a national leader of education. This support has been effective in improving the quality of the school's provision. For example, the school has worked closely with advisers to review teaching and learning and to moderate assessment to ensure that it is accurate. These actions have helped leaders to identify the precise steps they need to take to improve teaching.

Governance of the school

- Governance has improved since the last inspection. Existing governors are committed to recruiting additional members to improve their capacity to hold the school leaders to account.
- Governors confidently challenge leaders, ask relevant questions and undertake a variety of monitoring activities to help them understand how effectively leaders are securing improvement.
- Governors are fully committed to using their skills to support leaders to drive improvement further.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong safeguarding culture at the school and leaders and teachers take seriously their responsibility for protecting pupils. Appropriate checks are made to determine the suitability of staff and ensure that all adults are safe to work with children.
- Staff and governors receive regular updates to training which help them identify when pupils might be at risk. Staff can confidently explain the steps they need to take to

alert leaders when they have concerns. Leaders keep detailed and secure records and take decisive action to refer pupils when necessary, which helps them to support pupils who need extra help.

- Leaders and teachers form effective working partnerships with families and outside agencies. Leaders regularly monitor their work, check that it is making a difference and take further action if it is required. This helps to ensure that vulnerable pupils are well protected. Pupils confirm that they feel safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving, some teachers do not always use assessment accurately enough to identify what pupils already know. Where teaching is weaker, planning has not always been successfully matched to pupils' needs, or pupils are repeating activities aimed at developing skills they have already secured. This leads to some pupils, including the most able pupils, not being sufficiently challenged. As a result, some pupils labour on with work that is irrelevant and progress stalls. Some pupils who spoke with inspectors confirmed this.
- Teachers do not routinely intervene in pupils' learning or use effective questioning, which limits the degree to which they can challenge and extend pupils' learning or pick up on and clarify misunderstanding. This prevents pupils from explaining what they have understood and from developing secure subject knowledge.
- Teachers do not consistently explain precisely what they expect pupils to achieve, which means that pupils are not always clear what to do. This sometimes has an adverse impact on pupils' ability to sustain the concentration needed to make strong progress.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to practise and develop their calculation skills but are still developing fluency in how to use these skills to solve problems in different contexts.
- Teachers' feedback mostly follows the school's marking policy. However, it is not consistent in helping pupils to understand how to improve their work and it is sometimes incorrect. This limits its effectiveness in helping pupils to move forward with their learning.
- Although the school expects pupils to complete homework, some pupils say that it is not set as a matter of routine. This limits opportunities for pupils to build on skills they have learned in school.
- Pupils are keen to commit to their learning, but they are not always encouraged to have sufficient pride in their work. This means that sometimes work is untidily presented or worsens over time. Because this is not routinely picked up, pupils do not consistently improve their presentation.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to develop reading, writing and mathematics skills across other curriculum areas, and limited opportunities to develop investigative skills in science. As a result, pupils do not develop and practise a range of skills across different subjects.
- Where teaching is strongest, accurate assessment helps teachers to plan learning that precisely meets pupils' needs. In the examples of strong teaching, teachers have high

expectations and provide clear explanations, which mean that pupils stay focused and understand exactly what to do. For instance, teachers help pupils to build on previous learning to calculate the perimeter of irregular shapes.

- In the best teaching, teachers and teaching assistants are well deployed and adults draw out information from pupils using searching questions. Adults quickly pick up on pupils' misconceptions and reshape learning, which helps pupils to make effective progress.
- The teaching of reading is effective and is well supported by good early phonics teaching, which has improved each year. Good phonics teaching helps pupils to develop the necessary skills to become accurate and fluent readers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Adults promote all aspects of pupils' welfare effectively. They develop positive and trusting relationships with pupils. In response, pupils feel valued and generally show respect and cooperation towards each other and other adults. Pupils say they know whom they can turn to if they are worried or upset.
- The school provides well-targeted nurture and support for pupils who are experiencing emotional or social difficulties or find it hard to live up to the school's expectations of positive behaviour. In a safe and supportive environment, pupils gain the confidence to express their emotions and learn to manage their behaviour appropriately.
- Because adults have built positive relationships with vulnerable pupils and support their learning well, pupils are gaining confidence and developing the ability to cooperate and develop their communication skills. For example, pupils thoroughly immerse themselves in Forest School activities. During the inspection, they were observed enthusiastically tying knots and using twigs to construct a ladder to 'help teddy cross the wet mud'.
- Pupils are mostly confident and keen to learn, and are willing to engage in their learning. When teaching is strong, adults provide clear explanations and have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This inspires pupils to persevere with their learning.
- Pupils have a good understanding of issues to do with bullying and know how to stay safe when using the internet. They understand that they should not share personal information, including passwords and photographs, with people they do not know.
- The school has developed effective strategies for ensuring that pupils attend well. Leaders regularly monitor termly attendance and communicate well with parents and outside agencies. This helps pupils who previously had a record of frequent absence to come to school more regularly. The school recognises that some pupils still need support to attend school regularly, and is committed to developing its work further so that pupils can benefit fully from their education.

- Pupils enjoy taking on positions of responsibility such as that of sports ambassador. They enjoy taking part in fundraising activities such as a sponsored run and running stalls at school fairs to raise money for Harvest, Children in Need and Water Aid.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are respectful because teachers usually set clear boundaries and high expectations, which means that pupils know what is expected of them. Positive behaviour is generally maintained throughout lessons.
- Teachers often stop lessons to refocus learning, which helps pupils to concentrate and develop positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils move between lessons in a sensible and orderly manner. Playtimes and lunchtimes are well-supervised, happy occasions. Pupils enjoy running, playing and chatting sociably with one other.
- Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. Although a minority of parents are concerned about unacceptable behaviour, pupils say that adults usually deal with any problems quickly. Leaders explain that the school's absence of behaviour logs testifies to the fact that there are no major breaches of the school's behaviour rules.
- Pupils understand that it is important to consider others' feelings and realise the consequences of their actions. They know that name-calling and bullying are wrong and are not accepted at school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving expected standards in key stages 1 and 2 declined substantially from the previous year when these figures were broadly in line with pupils nationally. At key stage 2, progress in writing and mathematics declined from 2016 and was well below the national average in mathematics.
- In 2017, too few pupils at key stage 2 achieved expected standards in mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Although the proportion of pupils meeting expected standards in writing was close to the national figure, this had declined from the previous year. At key stage 1 in 2017, very few pupils met expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics and no pupils achieved higher standards.
- Over time, few disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities meet expected standards at the end of each key stage.
- The school's current assessment information and pupils' work reveal that across the school many groups of pupils are making effective progress in reading, writing and mathematics. There are some striking examples of strong progress. However, progress is inconsistent and several pupils, including some disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, make slower progress. Consequently, some pupils need to catch up to achieve the standards they are capable of.
- The progress of most-able pupils is not consistently strong across the school.

- Reading, writing and mathematics are not routinely embedded across the curriculum. This limits pupils' opportunities to practise and secure the skills they have learned in English and mathematics in other subjects.
- Leaders have taken the vital steps needed to address weak teaching, which means that pupils are now better supported to achieve the standards they are capable of. This is having a positive impact across the school and progress is improving. However, it is too early to see sustained impact.
- The teaching of phonics is effective and has led to improved phonics attainment over time. The proportion of pupils who reached expected standards in 2017 was in line with the national figure.

Early years provision

Good

- Over time, the proportion of children who reach expected standards at the end of the early years has risen to well above the national figure. This means that children are well prepared to make the transition into Year 1.
- Adults in the early years provide a warm and welcoming environment and develop positive relationships with children. Because children know the school routines and adults' expectations of them, they behave well.
- Adults make learning interesting and because children are excited to find things out they sustain concentration for prolonged periods of time. For example, children enjoy pouring warm water over ice to find objects frozen inside, and confidently explain that warmth melts ice.
- Leaders make good use of additional funding to support children who need extra help. As a result, all children in the early years, including disadvantaged children and children who have SEN and/or disabilities, make good progress.
- Leaders and teachers communicate closely with parents, which helps them to celebrate their child's successes and encourages them to support learning at home. Some parents who responded to the survey praise the school's effective communication and say that early visits to school help their children to settle well in the early years.
- Adults make good use of assessment to identify children's starting points, which helps them to plan learning activities appropriately to meet children's needs. Regular monitoring of children's progress helps teachers and leaders identify when they need to take further action to help children to make better progress.
- Adults model tasks well and intervene appropriately when children are unsure what to do. They ask searching questions which allow children to think carefully and explain their understanding. This allows adults to adapt tasks to promote further learning.
- The early years curriculum is thoughtfully planned and allows children to develop skills, knowledge and understanding across several areas of learning. For instance, children enjoy using their knowledge of numbers to solve problems such as which keys unlock a 'pirate chest'.
- Adults promote safeguarding effectively because children are well supervised and the indoor and outdoor learning environments are secure and free from hazards.

School details

Unique reference number	109208
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	10037075

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	174
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Brown
Headteacher	Alice Brown
Telephone number	01761 470 245
Website	www.stmarystimsbury.co.uk
Email address	stmarystimsbury_pri@bathnes.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 September 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- St Mary's CofE Primary School is a smaller than average sized school with 174 pupils on roll. The school has received support from a national leader of education and currently receives support from the local authority. The school meets the government's floor standards.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below the national average. There are very few pupils whose first language is not, or is believed not to be, English.
- The proportion of pupils receiving SEN support is below the national average. There are very few pupils supported by a statement or an education, health and care plan.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders and teachers. Meetings were held with the governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed learning in lessons across the school. Some of these were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised books from several year groups and subjects. Inspectors also heard pupils read. Inspectors spoke formally and informally with pupils from several year groups to gain their views of the school.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and considered a range of documents, including the school's evaluation of its work, school development plans, case studies, attendance records and safeguarding documentation.
- Inspectors took account of 62 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also met with several parents at the beginning and end of the school day. Inspectors reviewed 13 responses to the online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Catherine Beeks, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jen Edwards	Ofsted Inspector

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