

Stoke St Gregory Church of England Primary School

Stoke St Gregory, Taunton, Somerset TA3 6EG

Inspection dates

27–28 February 2018

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not make enough progress from their starting points. Although there is stronger progress in some year groups, this is not consistent across the school.
- Teaching does not support pupils who are struggling with concepts and processes in mathematics sufficiently.
- Teachers do not use the school's assessment and feedback policy consistently. This results in slow progress in some year groups. Too often activities repeat learning that pupils already know.
- The proportion of children achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check is too low.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. This has slowed the impact of initiatives to improve the school over recent years.
- The governing body has not held leaders accountable for pupils' progress.
- The most able pupils are not challenged well enough. Too few reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of each key stage.
- Middle leaders do not have sufficient impact in improving the quality of teaching across the school.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have created an environment where relationships are strong and pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are valued as individuals and well cared for.
- Throughout the school, pupils persevere and are highly resilient when approaching problem-solving and reasoning tasks.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. A strong transition process ensures that they settle into school quickly and good teaching prepares them well for Year 1.
- The school has a wide range of curriculum activities, including a strong musical tradition.
- Leaders encourage regular attendance. Figures are above the national average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, and accelerate the rate of improvement within the school by:
 - monitoring teaching and learning rigorously, holding all teaching staff fully accountable for the progress that pupils make
 - ensuring that teachers use the school’s assessment and feedback policy consistently
 - ensuring that middle leaders evaluate the impact of initiatives they have begun on improving the quality of teaching
 - ensuring that governors have the training they need to hold leaders robustly to account.
- Improve the progress pupils make by ensuring that:
 - learning is not slowed by repeating tasks unnecessarily
 - staff have the confidence and expertise to intervene effectively where pupils are struggling with concepts and processes
 - teachers’ expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving, particularly the most able, is sufficiently high.
- Improve the teaching of phonics in key stage 1, so more pupils meet the standard expected in the national phonics screening check.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have a view of the school's performance that is too generous. Although the impact of initiatives and improvements can be seen in some year groups, these are not yet consistent enough across the school. Not enough pupils are making good progress.
- Leaders are not robust in holding teachers to account for the impact of their teaching on pupils' progress. Leaders have not responded rapidly enough to improve weaker teaching. They are now acting to improve the quality of teaching, monitoring pupils' progress closely and have put good training opportunities in place for teachers. As a result, teaching is improving overall, although some weaknesses remain. Staff feel well supported and are eager to continue to improve their practice. Staff feel that leaders in the school care about their well-being.
- Leaders have implemented good systems for tracking pupils' progress. This is helping them to identify pupils who are not achieving as well as they should and to focus teachers' attention on these pupils. However, while this information is supporting some teachers in driving pupils' achievement forwards, not enough teachers are responding to the information effectively enough to raise standards.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Outcomes for current disadvantaged pupils, although inconsistent, are improving overall and they are catching up with other pupils.
- Leaders use the additional physical education and sport funding to good effect and the school has developed a strong sporting tradition. Pupils are encouraged to participate in sport both through participation in small-school sporting competitions and through the use of visitors, such as a para-athlete.
- Leaders have a commitment to the wider curriculum and pupils experience a broad range of learning opportunities. For example, the school has a strong tradition in music where all pupils learn a musical instrument of their choice in Year 4. Musical celebrations and performances throughout the year encourage pupils of all ages to participate and gain confidence in performing. Both parents and pupils recognise these events as a great asset to pupils' development. There is also a range of extra-curricular activities available and a wider range of visitors participate in the school assemblies. For example, all pupils have participated in Asian dancing, and 'Open the Book' come routinely to share a faith assembly at the school, as does the local church minister. Values such as respect and tolerance are promoted through religious education, which includes a variety of faiths, and pupils are prepared sufficiently well for life in modern Britain.
- Middle leaders monitor closely the work in pupils' books. However, they are not yet having sufficient impact on improving the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility.
- Almost all people involved in the life of the school have a high regard for the culture and ethos that the headteacher has embedded at Stoke St Gregory. The values and moral

character strongly promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of pupils' development. All pupils and staff have a nurturing care and respect for one another.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has not been sufficiently strong in holding leaders to account for the progress that pupils have made over recent years.
- The governing body monitors safeguarding effectively, quality assures the steps taken by leaders to ensure that children are safe within the school and has a good knowledge of what this requires.
- Governors understand the strengths of the school well. Also, they understand what needs to improve. They realise that pupils' progress has not been sufficiently good. Recently, governors have asked more challenging questions of leaders about the school's assessment information and the steps taken to make improvements.
- Governors are actively involved in school monitoring and evaluation. For example, a foundation governor has been involved in learning walks for religious education and another governor has more recently looked at writing books across the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that there are good systems in place to monitor the safety of pupils. Records are complete and up to date. The school carries out all the necessary checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work in the school. This includes checks on agency staff, volunteers and members of the governing body.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for in school. They are clear about school systems to promote their safety, including regular fire drills and safe routes to the school from the village hall, which is used for school activities. They talked confidently about e-safety.
- The vast majority of parents agreed that their children are safe and happy in school.
- Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training and are fully aware of the different factors that represent a risk to pupils' welfare. Staff understand their statutory responsibilities to report concerns to the appropriate people. Any concerns about pupils' welfare are reported promptly.
- The headteacher works effectively with external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils, including those at risk of harm, receive timely help and protection.
- Pupils trust adults in the school to deal quickly and effectively with any concerns they have. This reflects the culture of care that is evident in pupils of all ages. Pupils are certain that incidents of bullying are rare and the school is a safe and happy place.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is not good enough to ensure that pupils make the progress of which they are capable. It is too variable across classes and year groups.

- Teachers do not use the school’s assessment and feedback policy consistently or well enough to move pupils’ learning on quickly. Where the policy is not followed, pupils make repeated errors in punctuation, spelling is weak and improvements in learning are limited. Pupils make faster progress where the policy is used well, for example in writing activities, where pupils edit their work to improve their writing.
- Teaching does too little to ensure that the most able make good progress. Too often, these pupils are not challenged sufficiently as the tasks set involve too much repetition of aspects they already know, understand and can use. This was particularly a feature of some learning in mathematics and phonics. A third of pupils who completed the inspection questionnaire expressed the view that the work was sometimes not challenging enough.
- The teaching of mathematics is too variable across the school. When the challenge set is too great, pupils are left for too long without being able to reason through the problem. Where this occurs, teachers do not intervene or reshape their explanations quickly enough, so pupils are not developing their skills sufficiently.
- In recent years, the school has taken steps to improve pupils’ learning in mathematics. Training has focused staff on the use of reasoning activities in lessons. In some year groups this is working well and evidence in books shows an increase in pupils’ abilities to explain their thinking.
- In reading, teaching has focused on developing pupils’ skills and understanding through a wider range of learning activities. For example, specific questioning frameworks have been introduced for guided reading. Evidence shows that in some year groups pupils are responding to this very well and are catching up. The school’s progress data shows that a small number of pupils are working at a higher standard in reading and this figure is increasing steadily.
- Pupils make good progress when teachers explain to them what they are expected to learn. Pupils respond positively and learn new things quickly. They do not make such good progress when teachers’ expectations are not explained to them clearly.
- The environment around the school is bright and engaging. Learning is celebrated and staff promote and praise pupils’ achievement.
- In some classes, the pupils’ books demonstrate a strong level of pride in achievement and improved presentation and organisation of work.
- On the whole, teaching assistants provide effective support on an individual or small-group basis, particularly for pupils with low prior attainment and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school’s work to promote pupils’ personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils’ good behaviour is directly linked to the sense of care and community that the school creates. All pupils are valued for their individual character as well as their talents.

- Pupils enjoy their learning. They mostly work hard and are eager to do their best. They demonstrate good listening skills and are respectful of each other's ideas. A focus of the school has been to develop pupils' confidence and independence in their own skills and abilities, and so they persevere and are resilient with learning activities.
- Leaders provide pupils with opportunities to take on responsibilities through roles such as 'house captains', 'sports team members', 'play leaders' and as members of the school council. Pupils take these responsibilities seriously and are keen to contribute to the school community. For example, Year 6 play leaders help younger children to play games during lunchtimes.
- Pupils reported that bullying is very rare and that there is no discriminatory behaviour. They said that adults resolve any unkind behaviour, such as name-calling, quickly and fairly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, at unstructured times of the day and as they move around the school. They show patience, kindness and respect to each other and to adults.
- Pupils appreciate the reward system and very much enjoy the celebration assembly, where the house competition is valued and is described as adding a sense of joy to the school. Parents have a positive view of behaviour and the way that the school helps pupils to behave well. The vast majority agreed that the school deals well with any incidents of unkind behaviour.
- Attendance is a strength of the school. Levels of absence are low overall and few pupils are persistently absent. Pupils' attendance has improved year on year, because leaders take effective steps to monitor attendance and work well to support families who may need help.
- On rare occasions, when teachers have not been clear enough in their expectations, pupils become a little disruptive in lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Overall, since the previous inspection, the progress of pupils who have moved through key stage 2 has been low. In 2017, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics was well below the national average. Although more than the average proportion of pupils achieved the national expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined, too few pupils reached the higher standard in these areas.
- In some year groups where teaching is stronger, pupils' progress is rising quickly. However, this is too variable and not enough pupils, including the most able, are where they should be from their starting points.
- Pupils' outcomes in key stage 1 are better than in key stage 2, although still not consistently good. In 2017, pupils in key stage 1 did less well in reading and mathematics than in other schools. However, they achieved broadly similar standards

in writing. In 2016, high proportions of pupils achieved the national expected standards, but no pupils achieved greater depth.

- Attainment and progress for the most able pupils in reading, writing and mathematics, including the quality of handwriting and presentation, are improving in some year groups, with a small proportion of pupils now achieving higher standards. This is the result of teachers' clearer understanding of the expectations for each year group and leaders' higher expectations for the quality of teaching. However, this is not yet fully or consistently embedded and the headteacher's recent monitoring has identified that there is further work to do in this area.
- The results in the Year 1 phonics screening check have declined to below the national average for the last two years. This year's results are on track to be in line with the national average. This does not build sufficiently on the outcomes from early years, where results in reading are consistently above the national average.
- Current progress of disadvantaged pupils is improving as a result of the use of the pupil premium funding. An increasing number of these pupils are making stronger progress in reading and writing than other pupils. The difference between the attainment of disadvantaged and that of other pupils is reducing steadily.
- The majority of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress in writing and mathematics. However, in reading these pupils are not making sufficiently strong progress. The school's persistence in finding strategies to support individual pupils has yielded positive results in some cases. Parents shared this view, explaining that they felt that the school has gone to extensive lengths to support their child's progress.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children join the early years with skills and abilities that are broadly typical for their age. Staff have very strong links with the local pre-school setting and, as a result, children get off to a good start and settle in quickly.
- Staff have consistently high expectations of children, and teaching is carefully planned based on accurate assessment information of what the children know, can do and understand. Performance of children at the end of the early years has been consistently above the national average since the previous inspection.
- Children are enthusiastic, motivated and keen to learn. They have enquiring minds and listen carefully to what adults have to say. They behave well in sessions which are directed by adults. As they learn together, children are able to listen to each other and take turns well.
- The early years curriculum provides a range of interesting and engaging experiences. Children benefit from learning both indoors and outdoors, as staff use the learning environment well.
- All staff are strongly committed to keeping children safe and children have strong relationships with staff both in early years and in the school.
- The leader has a clear and accurate understanding of what is going well and takes appropriate, well-thought-out steps to continue to improve the children's learning. For

example, over recent years staff have used a new technique to bring all the aspects of phonics teaching together in a session. This is enabling children to move forward in learning quickly. Also, staff have introduced a new programme to support children in speaking in whole sentences. These improvements promote good progress in both reading and writing.

School details

Unique reference number	123802
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10042694

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	94
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Elston
Headteacher	Deborah Barrett
Telephone number	01823 490437
Website	slp5.somerset.org.uk/webs/stokestgregory
Email address	office@stoke-st-gregory.somerset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 April–1 May 2014

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school in a rural Somerset community.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standard for attainment and progress.
- The school is led and managed by the headteacher and the governing body. The chair of the governing body is new in post this year and several of the governing body are also new.
- The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage.
- The proportions of pupils who have (SEN) and/or disabilities is in line with the national average.
- The school is organised in four classes: early years, and three mixed-age classes of Year 1 and Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4, and Year 5 and Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited lessons across the school. Many of the visits to lessons were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector also observed pupils' behaviour at other times, for example on arrival to school, in the lunch hall and as they moved around the school site.
- The inspector spoke to pupils during lessons and during lunchtime about their learning.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness, the current plans for improvement and leaders' checks on the quality of teaching. Records relating to safeguarding and behaviour were also scrutinised. The inspector also had several discussions with the headteacher and middle leaders within the school about school performance.
- A meeting with members of the governing body was held. The inspector also considered written records of the work of the governing body to support and challenge the school.
- A telephone discussion was held with a school improvement partner from the local authority.
- Pupils' work in books was scrutinised by the inspector, both during visits to lessons and separately. The inspector also considered the school's information on the progress and attainment of the current pupils in the school.
- The inspector took into account responses to Ofsted's online surveys, including 33 responses from parents, 49 from pupils and 10 from staff. The inspector also spoke to parents informally at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Jen Edwards, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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