

Okeford Fitzpaine Church of England Voluntary Aided School

The Cross, Okeford Fitzpaine, Blandford Forum, Dorset, DT11 0RF

Inspection dates

7–8 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
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

- Leaders, including governors, do not have capacity to bring about the rapid improvement needed for the school to function as it should. External partners have not provided timely support. This has left new leaders and teachers without much needed help.
- Leaders have not stemmed the school's decline. As a result, pupils' progress and achievement in reading, writing and mathematics have been slow over time.
- Current leaders and teachers have started to rebuild the school. However, their actions are not sufficient to address the school's endemic weaknesses. Pupils are not well prepared for their next stage of education.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that the national curriculum is taught in full. Until very recently, core aspects of the English and mathematics curriculum were not taught.
- Teaching is inadequate. It is poorly planned. Pupils of different ages in the same class do not receive work that meets their needs.
- Teachers do not use their assessments well enough. Intervention is not helping pupils catch up quickly. Gaps in pupils' learning are left unresolved. So, very few pupils are working at the standards expected for their age.
- The most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils, and those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities do not make enough progress over time.
- Provision in the early years is inadequate. Teaching is not closely matched to children's needs. Adults do not provide adequate support or challenge to help children learn well.
- Teachers do not routinely pick up on or notice when pupils go off task. This missed learning time is too readily accepted. As a result, pupils' underachievement persists.

The school has the following strengths

- Since in post, the principal has been relentless in her drive for improvement. Parents and carers welcome the changes that have been introduced.
- Leaders have acted quickly to improve safeguarding arrangements and pupils' personal development and welfare.

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?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - governors ensuring that external support is secured to support current leaders to secure onward improvement to teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' achievement improves rapidly so that it becomes good
 - ensuring that assessment is accurate in all classes across the school
 - ensuring that leaders' checks on teaching and learning are thorough and that teachers act on advice quickly, so that pupils who have previously underachieved catch up quickly
 - ensuring that national curriculum requirements are met
 - ensuring that staff plan interventions systematically so that pupils who have previously underachieved catch up.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - teachers use their assessments of what pupils know, can do and understand, so that they make consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics
 - teachers plan work that makes sure pupils can apply their writing skills and pupils can write with the accuracy and depth expected for their age
 - teaching enables pupils to gain a strong understanding of what they read
 - phonics teaching enables pupils to read well and apply their phonics skills to their spelling
 - teaching in mixed-age classes supports pupils to learn effectively
 - teaching makes sure that the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities make consistently good progress
 - off-task behaviour or low-level disruption are eradicated so that they do not act as barriers to pupils' progress.
- Improve the quality of provision in the early years by ensuring that:
 - assessment is accurate and used to plan work that meets children's needs well
 - teachers and additional adults support children's learning by making pertinent assessments and deepening children's understanding.

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

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

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Over time, leadership has been ineffective in providing an adequate standard of education. Unusually, all staff and leaders left the school last year. The current principal, who started in September 2017, has made inroads to rebuild the school and restore parental confidence. Week on week, there are visible improvements. However, the job in hand has been too big to resolve quickly.
- The principal is transparent about what has been achieved so far and the many aspects that require rapid improvement. Her evaluation of the school's performance is accurate. She does not shy away from sharing information with parents. This has been instrumental in rebuilding trust and setting targets for improvement. However, her actions are not yet ensuring that teaching is eradicating pupils' prior underachievement. As a result, pupils' outcomes remain inadequate.
- External support has not provided leaders or teachers with the help they need. This has limited leaders' impact on improving teaching, learning and assessment. Systems to hold teachers to account for improving their teaching and accelerating pupils' progress are not yet having the desired impact. For example, where pupils have gaps in learning, interventions are planned. However, leaders do not follow up the impact of this additional teaching sufficiently, or the planned work is too sporadic. As a result, leadership intervention is not bringing about change quickly enough.
- Leaders' checks on teaching are not precise enough. Leaders' guidance and support are not helping to improve some teachers' subject knowledge. As a result, teaching strategies remain unchanged and this restricts the progress that pupils make over time.
- The principal and her staff have overhauled behaviour management systems effectively. All pupils are now taught in class and systems to check pupils' behaviour are applied consistently. Consequently, incidents of disruptive behaviour are now rare. However, low-level off-task behaviour remains.
- Until very recently, leaders did not deploy the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils well. Poor strategic leadership of additional funding has limited governors' ability to hold teachers and leaders to account for its impact. This is now resolved. However, the use of pupil premium funding is not yet enabling these pupils to make the rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics they need to catch up.
- The curriculum is too narrow and does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their English and mathematics skills across the curriculum. There is limited teaching of other curriculum subjects. Poor curriculum planning also limits pupils' knowledge and understanding of life in modern Britain.
- The leadership of special educational needs is not enabling pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to catch up quickly. The quality of resources to support these pupils is too variable and sometimes pupils are left with no support to complete tasks that are too difficult. Conversely, where activities are planned to meet pupils' needs, teaching is beginning to bring about rapid improvement. As a result, this group of pupils make progress that is too inconsistent across the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's weaknesses. However, governors have not been successful in stemming the decline in the school's performance since the last inspection.
- Governors have not shied away from making whole-school decisions to improve the sustainability of the school. However, they have not always communicated their actions well. Communications with parents have improved in recent months. For example, an open meeting earlier this year explained why strategic decisions and staff changes had come about.
- Governors have responded to support they have received from Southern Academies Trust and a national leader of governance. As a result, minutes of meetings are detailed and show an increasing level of challenge to school leaders. However, governors have not liaised with the local authority closely enough to arrange effective support for leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have taken robust action over the last seven months to improve safeguarding procedures. For example, a new whole-school record-keeping system has been introduced. Pupils' records have been reorganised and all confidential information about vulnerable pupils has been passed on to pupils' onward school placements, in line with requirements. Governors undertake routine checks of the culture of safeguarding and safety of the site.
- Risk assessments have been written to lessen the impact of current risks on the school site and plans are in place to upgrade site security further. Staff are vigilant at playtimes, and at the beginning and end of the school day, and they ensure that school policies to keep pupils safe are followed thoroughly.
- Staff training in safeguarding matters is up to date. Staff notice when pupils are at risk of harm. They know how to make referrals and use and apply their safeguarding training well to ensure that they reduce pupils' risk of harm. Leaders with specific responsibilities for safeguarding work closely with external agencies and families to ensure that pupils receive timely and appropriate support.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They have confidence that they can go to any member of staff if they have concerns. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online when using the internet.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate. It is poorly planned and fails to meet pupils' needs. The principal and her staff have completed an accurate baseline assessment of pupils' performance. As a result, they understand the extent of pupils' underachievement at the school. However, teaching is not yet remedying these shortcomings, caused by previously weak teaching.
- Teachers do not use assessment information accurately to plan work that meets pupils'

needs. As a result, pupils are not catching up quickly enough and pupils' wide gaps in learning persist. Pupils' underachievement is widespread.

- Teachers do not plan for the wide differences of ability between pupils in the same class. As a result, pupils often have to sit and wait for an extended period while pupils of other ages or abilities are taught before they receive work at the right level. This poor practice is widely accepted and so weaknesses in pupils' progress are not picked up.
- The deployment of additional adults is too inconsistent. In some classes, adults provide targeted support which is helping pupils to learn and make strong progress. In other classes, adults do not have the skills or subject knowledge to have a positive impact on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding. On occasions, adults are used to 'keep pupils busy' rather than help them learn. Consequently, this support restricts pupils' learning further and, in some cases, their learning regresses.
- The teaching of reading is weak. There is no cohesive strategy to improve the teaching of reading. Inroads have been made to ensure that pupils read more often. Parents appreciate the extra reading opportunities on offer before school. However, the teaching of comprehension skills to ensure that the pupils understand what they read is not good enough. As a result, too few pupils read with the fluency and the understanding that is expected for their age.
- The teaching of phonics in key stage 1 is not closely matched to pupils' needs. Pupils do not apply their knowledge and understanding of phonics to help them spell accurately. This is not identified quickly enough and so pupils practise inaccurate spelling, and this restricts pupils' learning.
- The teaching of writing is poorly planned. Teachers are attempting to cover much of the curriculum that has been missed in previous years. However, this is too little, too late. Pupils do not write for a range of purposes or audiences. The narrow curriculum in place does not enable pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects. As a result, teaching does not stretch and challenge previously middle-attaining and the most able pupils. Teachers have prioritised teaching spelling, punctuation and grammar. However, this work is very recent and it is too early to see its impact. Therefore, many pupils do not have the skills and knowledge required to write with the accuracy, detail and sophistication expected for their age.
- Recent changes to the way that mathematics is taught in key stage 2 is helping pupils to make swifter progress this year. Pupils who previously regressed in their learning or had not been given work at the right level are catching up. However, this is not yet making amends for poor teaching in the past. Although there are positive signs of improvement, pupils are not yet working at the standards expected for their age in mathematics.
- The teaching of English and mathematics has been prioritised to help pupils catch up and eliminate previous underachievement. However, work in other subjects is sparse and so pupils find it difficult to express how teaching in subjects such as science and geography helps them develop and deepen their understanding. Consequently, pupils do not get fair access to the curriculum and are not prepared well for their next stage of education.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Pupils report that teachers provide high levels of care and support. They say that staff look out for them and 'school is much better this year'. Pupils say that a more consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour means that their learning time is not interrupted like it was in the past. Pupils also value teachers' positive comments about how their work is improving.
- Nevertheless, pupils do not yet have the necessary determination and resilience in their learning and some pupils are overly dependent on other adults. Others happily sit and accept tasks that are too easy, while the teacher is working with other pupils. This is accepted as the norm. Pupils remark how learning is much improved. This underpins the extent of pupils' underachievement in the past.
- Pupils of all abilities, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities, do not consistently receive the precise teaching they need to make good progress. This also restricts their personal development and welfare.
- Supervision at breaktimes is adequate. However, sometimes, adults do not ensure that pupils are engaged in activities. As a result, some pupils are left to wander on the playground alone and go unnoticed. Equipment on the playground is sparse and so many pupils run around with limited purpose to their play.
- Support for vulnerable pupils and families is strong. The combined work of leaders, teachers and external agency support ensures that pupils get the emotional support they need.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils' attendance has declined this year. It is below the national average. Leaders have started to track pupils' attendance carefully. As a result, persistent absenteeism is reducing this term.
- The principal has responded quickly to ensure that behaviour has improved. Staff adhere to a clear system for monitoring and checking poor behaviour. Pupils welcome this improvement and have responded positively.
- Those pupils who were taught out of their classroom last year are now successfully integrated back with their classmates. Rewards that focus on whole-school values, such as courage and respect, provide pupils with a clear sense of belonging and understanding of right and wrong. Pupils say teachers reinforce these values and this helps them learn.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils' outcomes have declined considerably since the previous inspection. Staff have ensured that accurate assessments of what pupils know, can do and understand are in place this year. These assessments pinpoint the extent of the widespread

underachievement in reading, writing, and mathematics. Weak teaching and the narrow curriculum limit pupils' knowledge and understanding. Current teaching is not enabling these pupils to catch up quickly enough.

- The proportion of children in Reception who reach a good level of development, the standard that is expected at the end of the early years, has been too variable in the past. In 2017, it was in line with the national average. However, a review of pupils' skills and knowledge on entry to Year 1 demonstrates that children's understanding was not secure. Now in Year 1, these pupils are not making good progress because teaching is not sufficiently matched to their needs.
- In 2017, every pupil in Year 1 met the required standard in the phonics screening check. However, the current teaching of phonics is weak and so pupils do not make the progress that they should. Pupils' application of phonics to their writing is too inconsistent. This limits their ability to write with the accuracy and detail that is expected for their age.
- Pupils' outcomes over time at key stage 1 have been too low in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupil numbers are too small to report on individual years or groups of pupils. As a result of targeted teaching, pupils currently in Years 2 and 3 are beginning to make accelerated progress in writing and mathematics. However, previously lower-attaining pupils are not catching up quickly enough in reading.
- For the last two years, pupils' progress and achievement at the end of key stage 2 have been poor. In 2017, no pupils reached the expected standard in writing. Very few reached the expected standard in mathematics. A few pupils reached the expected standard in reading. However, overall, pupils' achievement is among the lowest nationally. Although current pupils are beginning to catch up, their underachievement has been so extensive that the overall situation remains unchanged. Very few pupils in key stage 2 are working at the standards that are expected for their age in reading and writing.
- Across the school, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils, boys, girls and the most able do not make the progress of which they are capable. The school does not provide an adequate education for its pupils.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- Leadership and teaching in early years are inadequate. Leadership does not hold staff to account for the quality of education provided. Expectations of what children can achieve are too low. Teaching does not meet children's needs well enough. Phonics teaching is weak. As a result, current children are not being prepared successfully for Year 1.
- Teaching does not sustain children's interest well enough. Sometimes, children have to wait for the teacher for an extended period when they have completed tasks and there is no additional learning on offer. On other occasions, children lose interest quickly and wander off to other areas of the classroom, including when staff are talking to them.
- Assessment in the early years is not precise enough. There is fragility in published assessment information. Some children last year did not enter Year 1 with the skills

and knowledge matched to their end of year assessments in the early years.

- Early years staff do not use assessment practices well. Adults record what children are doing and not what children understand. As a result, adults do not plan learning that matches children's needs, and so children make slow progress.
- The indoor area is inviting and interesting. There are zoned areas encompassing a range of subject areas that provide opportunities for children to explore their themed learning. For example, the role play area is a dinosaur museum and contains many props for exploration. This provides positive opportunities for children to develop their speech and investigation skills. However, staff do not provide the support and direction to enable children to make the most of what is on offer. As a result, opportunities to deepen children's thinking are missed and children's learning is hindered.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection are very happy with how their children have settled. Teachers and adults have strong relationships with children. There are clear routines at the beginning of the day and children show pride in tidying away their resources and show independence when doing so.
- Statutory safeguarding and welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	113810
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10047837

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs D Sale
Principal	Mrs J Bacon
Telephone number	01258 860530
Website	www.okeford.dorset.sch.uk/
Email address	office@okeford.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 January 2015

Information about this school

- This is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Numbers on roll have decreased sharply in the last 12 months.
- There are three classes. One class is for early years and Year 1 pupils, one class is for Year 2 and 3 pupils, and there is a class for Years 4, 5 and 6.
- There have been considerable staff changes since the last inspection. There have been a number of acting headteachers. The current principal has been in post since September 2017. She also has a part-time teaching commitment. A new principal has been appointed for April 2018.
- Apart from the principal, no teaching staff have permanent contracts. September 2017 saw a 100% change in teaching staff.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support from the pupil premium is in line with the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support and those who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- Pupil numbers at the end of key stage 2 are too small for the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6, to apply.
- The school has been supported by Southern Academies Trust.
- Very recently, governors have commissioned support from the Salisbury Church of England Diocese to provide school improvement support. Additional local authority support has also been in place since summer 2017.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in visits to lessons across the school and reviewed pupils' work in books. The inspector worked in close partnership with the principal to review pupils' progress and provision over time.
- The inspector talked with a group of pupils to seek their views about the school. She also listened to the views of pupils during lessons and at social times. The inspector listened to pupils from key stages 1 and 2 read.
- The inspector held meetings with the principal, the early years teacher and representatives of the governing body. Two meetings were held with the local authority. She also held a meeting with the Chief Executive Officer of Southern Academies Trust. A telephone conversation was held with the director of education for the Salisbury Diocese.
- The inspector scrutinised a number of school documents, including: the school's action plans; the school's view of its own performance; pupils' performance information; governors' minutes; records relating to behaviour; checks on teaching and learning; pupils' attendance information; and a range of safeguarding records.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at breaktimes and around the school.
- The inspector considered nine responses to the online survey, Parent View, as well as eight free-text responses from parents. She also talked to parents during the inspection to seek their views of the school and the education their children receive. The inspector talked to a range of staff to gather their views. She considered five responses to the online staff questionnaire and eight pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Julie Carrington, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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