

Bethany Church of England Junior School

Knole Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset BH1 4DJ

Inspection dates

6–7 June 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Particularly since 2016, too few pupils have achieved or exceeded the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress has not been rapid enough, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- Attainment in spelling, punctuation and grammar, and in pupils' ability to reason and solve problems in mathematics, has not been high enough.
- Teaching has been too variable in quality. Teachers have not provided a consistent level of challenge to enable enough pupils, whatever their circumstances and level of ability, to make sufficient progress.
- Some teachers do not closely follow the school policy on how to give feedback to pupils in order to help them to improve their work.
- Governors have not evaluated pupils' progress in their work robustly enough to help ensure that all weaknesses are quickly resolved.
- The curriculum, while having some strengths, has not ensured that pupils have the full range of skills that they need to prepare them well for the next stage of their education.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, do not have enough opportunities or level of challenge to deepen and extend their understanding.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop the range and depth of their writing when working in subjects outside English lessons.
- Several of the initiatives which school leaders have introduced to improve the school's performance are too recent to have had sufficient impact on pupils' achievement.
- Some staff have had too few opportunities to learn from the good practice which other colleagues demonstrate in their own classes.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well, feel safe, enjoy coming to school and feel very well cared for, as both parents and pupils acknowledge.
- The headteacher has overcome some significant challenges since his appointment. He has made some changes which show a capacity for the school to improve further.
- More pupils, especially higher up the school, are now on track to meet appropriately challenging targets.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make significant gains in progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment and progress in mathematics by further developing pupils' skills in reasoning and problem-solving.
- Improve attainment and progress in writing by:
 - ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to write with more range and depth when doing projects outside their work in English
 - further developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Improve teaching so that it becomes securely good and prepares pupils better for the next stage of their education by:
 - making sure that there is a consistent level of challenge in the work to enable pupils of all abilities, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able, to fulfil their potential
 - spreading the best practice in teaching that exists in some classes more widely throughout the school
 - ensuring that teachers consistently follow the school's policy on providing feedback which enables pupils to improve their work.
- Improve the impact of leadership by increasing governors' commitment to enhancing subject-based knowledge and skills throughout the school so that these match present strengths in pupils' personal development.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since his appointment in 2016, the headteacher has faced significant challenges in improving the school's effectiveness. These include having to manage several redundancies and make other staff changes. The challenges have restricted the school's attempts to rectify previous underachievement. The school created a new leadership structure last year. However, some of the improvement strategies have been in place for too short a time to have a significant impact throughout the whole school.
- Although a conscious focus on improving provision and outcomes in Year 6 has led to much improved progress in this year group, the improvements have not yet filtered down sufficiently to have had a significant impact on other year groups.
- The leadership successfully integrates pupils from a range of backgrounds and challenging circumstances into a caring environment. This fosters impressive personal development. However, this has not yet been matched by progress in developing the knowledge and academic progress necessary to give pupils the best possible start in the next phase of their education after leaving the school.
- Pupils enjoy the range of curriculum projects which develop their independence and confidence. However, there has not been the same success in incorporating basic skills and knowledge in the core subjects. As a result, the leadership recognises that it needs to develop the curriculum further.
- School leaders have worked hard to develop teachers' skills, confidence and knowledge through a range of professional development activities. Much of this has come from within the Ocean Learning Trust. The senior leadership team checks the quality of teaching and learning regularly. However, teaching still varies in quality, particularly in terms of expectations. This is a significant reason why there have been variations in the rate of progress between classes.
- The leadership has been very successful in ensuring that pupils are well cared for and supported. Staff are dedicated to supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils, and often their families also. Many of these pupils make great strides in personal development. A significant number of pupils join the school speaking English as an additional language, and staff give them very effective support.
- The leadership has increasingly used the pupil premium funding effectively to reduce the gap between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school. For example, the funding pays for additional staff support and resources.
- The school uses special needs funding effectively. Some high-quality support has helped improve the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The leadership has used the sports funding constructively. It has paid for resources and increasing staff expertise. Pupil participation rates in sporting activities have risen significantly. Recently, for the first time, the school has been successful in inter-school sports competitions.

- Pupils learn about a range of faiths and different cultures, at the same time as the school celebrates its strong Christian ethos. One of the school's priorities, successfully achieved, has been to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- Pupils integrate within the school very well, so that the school is a vibrant, inclusive community, as many parents attest.
- School leaders understand the school's strengths and areas for development well. Their evaluation of what needs to be done is accurate, and school improvement planning focuses on the right priorities. For example, the headteacher recognises that there could be closer liaison with the neighbouring feeder infant school. The school is currently introducing changes, including a new assessment and tracking system, designed to provide information which will lead to even more effective support for individual learning needs.
- The leadership's focus on Year 6, and on improving specific aspects such as reading, have resulted in gains in pupils' progress. The gains show the school's capacity to improve, particularly since middle leaders responsible for year groups, and the staff generally, are fully behind the school's drive for improvement. The senior leadership team, and the Trust, understand that the challenge is to spread the improvements more securely throughout the school so that there are fewer variations between classes and year groups.

Governance of the school

- Governors are very active in school and have a good understanding of some of the strengths of the school, notably the high quality of care and support for pupils. They support the leadership, while also asking pertinent questions when dealing with difficult issues such as redundancies. However, governors have a less developed understanding of previous weaknesses in the school's academic performance and how they should follow up issues around the achievement of different groups of pupils.
- Although governors also have responsibilities for the neighbouring feeder infant school, the arrangements for the transition of pupils between the two schools are not as effective as they might be in ensuring continuity. The school's development plan recognises this as an area for development.
- Governors take their responsibilities for safeguarding seriously and have had appropriate training to update their understanding, for example by raising awareness of the potential dangers of radicalisation and extremism.
- Governors check the arrangements and qualities of the procedures surrounding the management of staff accountability and the professional development designed to benefit staff, not least in helping staff meet their targets.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. A significant proportion of pupils come from a range of challenging circumstances, and staff understand the importance of ensuring the safety and well-being of all pupils in the school.
- Leaders make sure that all staff have regular training in how to exercise their responsibilities for safeguarding. Inspectors talked to teachers, who satisfied them of their awareness of the relevant procedures needed when they identify possible risks to pupils. The school records and acts appropriately on any incidents that have safeguarding implications.
- The school has dedicated personnel who work with pupils and sometimes their families also, for example when attendance is an issue. There are good relationships with a range of agencies outside the school, to ensure that the school meets pupils' needs.
- There are appropriate checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children.
- Inspectors had conversations with staff, pupils and children, as well as looking at surveys. These showed that both adults and pupils firmly believe that the school provides a safe environment, and that they greatly appreciate this.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has been too variable in recent years. The leadership acknowledges this, and the fact that there has not been enough effective teaching to enable enough pupils either to meet the expected standards or make sufficient progress to exceed them. This has been reflected in school test results.
- Teachers have not been consistent in their expectations of what pupils can and should be able to achieve, both in some individual lessons and over time. For example, during the inspection, several pupils and parents, while very supportive of most aspects of the school, told inspectors that sometimes they found the work 'too easy'. Inspectors saw this for themselves in some of the pupils' work.
- The lack of sustained challenge for some pupils has been evident both in previous test results, notably in 2016, as well as in the work which pupils do in class.
- The underachievement has affected most groups of pupils, although the school has been very successful in boosting the progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The most able pupils, including some from disadvantaged circumstances, have not made the progress that they should. The tasks that they undertake do not build sufficiently on their prior learning. This is because teachers do not give the pupils enough challenge in the type of task they attempt, or they wait too long before moving pupils on to more demanding tasks.
- Not all teachers follow the school's policy for how they should give useful feedback to pupils on how to address errors or shortcomings and thereby improve their work.

- Teachers understand the need to raise standards and improve progress. They are benefiting from good opportunities to develop their skills. Teachers are now more used to using assessment information to plan for effective learning, although this is not yet consistent. There is some very effective teaching now taking place, particularly higher up the school. However, as the leadership acknowledges, the good practice evident in some lessons and in pupils' work is not yet spread widely enough throughout the school.
- Teaching is improving, in spite of the inconsistencies. Teachers have had effective training in how to promote good reading habits, and this is having a good impact on pupils' progress in, and their attitudes towards, reading. There is some good quality writing in English. Some teachers are less confident and challenging in their teaching of mathematics.
- Improvements in teaching and some good support work have improved the progress of many disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils with learning difficulties benefit from very good support. The school has trained support staff well. Inspectors saw several examples of pupils with a range of learning difficulties benefiting from targeted support. Staff also give strong support to pupils at an early stage of learning English.
- Teachers manage classroom behaviour very well, most of the time. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and there are very positive relationships within classes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- There is very strong pastoral care for all pupils, which ensures that pupils feel safe and secure in school. Pupils know how to stay safe, and the school gives good advice to them and their parents.
- Staff work hard to support parents as well as pupils.
- The long-standing breakfast club gives several pupils a healthy and enjoyable start to the school day.
- The school provides very good opportunities for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Inspectors saw this in some of the pupils' work on multicultural topics. The school benefits from its close links with the church and celebrates its Christian ethos successfully.
- Staff enhance pupils' confidence and sense of self-worth. An inspector saw this in an assembly conducted by pupils. The school also develops leadership skills, for example by training sports leaders.
- Pupils say that bullying, although it does sometimes occur, is not a major 'issue', and that staff deal with it effectively. School records confirm this.
- Pupil and parent surveys confirm that pupils are very happy at the school. They enjoy

the good range of clubs and visits, such as the residential trips.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- A few pupils do not attend school as often as they should. Some of these pupils are from challenging circumstances. The school has dedicated staff who work with these pupils and their families to help them and to increase their awareness of the importance of regular attendance.
- Pupils feel that behaviour is good. There is occasional low-level disruption in class, but there is no evidence of a serious impact on learning.
- The school very occasionally excludes pupils for serious incidents. When this happens, the staff go the extra mile to make sure that they manage the incidents well and reintegrate the pupils back into class successfully.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils have not made sufficient progress over time. There has been a trend of underachievement, and results dropped in 2017 when too many pupils did not reach the expected levels in reading, writing, mathematics, spelling, punctuation and grammar. Underachievement affected all groups to a varying extent, although pupils who speak English as an additional language have consistently achieved relatively better than other pupils.
- Achievement in the past was affected by factors such as staff turbulence, some weaknesses in attendance and the fact that a relatively large number of pupils join the school with learning issues. Nevertheless, results have still been disappointing, especially since many pupils who join the school in Year 3 do so from the feeder primary school with attainment close to the national average.
- During the current school year, there have been some marked improvements, although they are less evident in some year groups than others. This partly reflects variations in teachers' expectations and the limited challenge in some of the work set for pupils.
- Improved progress is most evident in Year 6. These pupils have benefited from good teaching, characterised by higher expectations. The leadership has put a focus on this year group in the current school year. Many of these pupils are now on track to meet or exceed expectations by the end of the year. The gap between the achievement of disadvantaged and other pupils has narrowed. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making better progress because of good support.
- Reading standards are improving, mainly because the staff have given this aspect of learning particular attention. Inspectors saw this throughout the school. The school has cultivated an emphasis on reading for pleasure and understanding. The result has been that although there are variations in reading standards, they are rising overall in terms of fluency, accuracy and confidence. Many pupils now read regularly at home and school.
- The quality of writing has improved, as seen in English books. It is particularly evident

when teachers have high expectations. For example, the best writing seen in Year 5 has been around the work pupils did on 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Most pupils take pride in their work, including the presentation. In English, pupils write in a variety of genres, both fiction and non-fiction. Some of the most impressive writing done recently has been completed by able disadvantaged pupils.

- Progress in writing is much less obvious in other subject areas, usually when it is done as part of the popular projects higher up the school. For example, there is too little writing in science. In history, there are too many low-level tasks which encourage an accumulation of facts but do not develop higher levels of analysis and understanding. There is an overemphasis on structured tasks which do not encourage more in-depth writing. Consequently, there is often a mismatch between the quality of work seen between English and other subjects.
- Progress in mathematics is evident, but it is slower overall than in other subjects. The leadership recognises in the school improvement plan that further developing pupils' skills such as problem-solving and reasoning in mathematics remains a priority.
- Disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress than before, although in some classes there is still a gap between their progress and that of other pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making better progress, often due to skilled support from staff. Pupils with English as an additional language continue to make good progress overall.
- The most able pupils are making more progress than before, although it is more evident in some classes than others. This inconsistency remains an area for the school to address in order to ensure that by the time all pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, their levels of knowledge, understanding and skills in the various subjects match their progress in personal development. This is necessary to ensure that pupils are fully prepared for the next stage of their education.

School details

Unique reference number	142100
Local authority	Bournemouth
Inspection number	10045395

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	344
Appropriate authority	Board of Trustees
Chair	Elizabeth Spreadbury
Headteacher	Lawrence Woodward
Telephone number	01202 393 570
Website	www.bethanyjunior.co.uk
Email address	bethany@oceanlearning.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Bethany Junior School is larger than the average-sized junior school. It is part of the Ocean Learning Trust, which comprises several schools in Bournemouth. Bethany Junior School joined the Trust on 1 July 2015. The current headteacher was appointed in the following year.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is over double the national average.
- The school met the current floor standards in 2017. These are the government's

minimum expectations of progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.

- The school operates a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited most classrooms in order to observe pupils' learning and behaviour. Members of the senior leadership team accompanied inspectors on some of these visits.
- Inspectors looked at a substantial number of pupils' books. They also heard pupils reading and talked to pupils about their experience of school.
- Inspectors had discussions with the headteacher and several other staff. The lead inspector met with the executive head of the Ocean Learning Trust and another Trust member. He also met three governors.
- An inspector met with some parents informally. The lead inspector received two letters from parents. Inspectors also reviewed the school's own surveys of parents' and pupils' views.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of itself, the school improvement plan, documents relating to safeguarding and assessment and tracking information about pupils currently in the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 39 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

John Laver, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Adam Matthews	Ofsted Inspector
Non Davies	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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