

St Mary's RC Primary School

Rowden Hill, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 2AH

Inspection dates

10–11 July 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Over time, leaders have failed to halt the steep decline in the quality of education the school provides. Pupils' outcomes are inadequate.
- Safeguarding is not effective, including in the early years. Supervision of pupils is inadequate. Pupils are exposed to unnecessary risk.
- Staff morale is low. Staff do not get the training or guidance that they need to improve their practice.
- Children in the Reception make poor progress and lack independence. In addition, transition arrangements between Nursery and Reception are weak.
- Teaching fails to take sufficient account of pupils' needs. Activities do not challenge or inspire pupils. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are far too low and support staff are not deployed effectively.
- The school's pupil premium strategy is not fit for purpose. Disadvantaged pupils do not make the progress that they should.
- Teachers' assessments are not accurate, including in the early years. This hinders the ability of teachers to provide learning that meets pupils' needs.
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is ineffective. Over time, these pupils make poor progress with little sign of improvement.
- Governors do not fulfil their roles and responsibilities. Over time, they have not challenged and held leaders to account for the school's poor performance.
- Teaching fails to develop pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding. Pupils are unable to apply their calculation skills to solve problems.
- Too many pupils are absent from school.
- Leaders have failed to provide an effective curriculum. Pupils have significant gaps in their understanding in a range of subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- Interim leaders are challenging poor performance. Their work is improving safeguarding record-keeping.
- The sport premium is well utilised. Staff benefit from external support to develop their teaching of physical education (PE).

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 leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders urgently establish an effective safeguarding culture which leads to close supervision of pupils and thorough assessment of risks across the school
 - leaders at all levels have an accurate understanding of the school's work and tackle weaknesses swiftly, in order to challenge underperformance
 - leaders implement robust assessment systems to check the progress of pupils accurately
 - leaders monitor pupils' progress closely and use this information to identify underperformance where it occurs, acting swiftly to bring about improvements
 - a rich, and varied curriculum is in place, which develops pupils' knowledge across a range of subjects
 - leadership of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is in place, so that pupils are well supported and make good progress
 - governors access school performance information so that they can challenge leaders where underperformance occurs
 - the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils enables pupils to make good progress.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers consider closely what pupils know and can do so that they provide learning that builds on pupils' knowledge and understanding and matches their needs
 - teachers deploy support staff effectively to improve pupils' outcomes
 - teachers raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve significantly
 - teachers develop pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics, so that pupils confidently apply their understanding of mathematics and calculation skills to solve problems
 - teaching enthuses pupils, resulting in improved attitudes to learning
 - teachers help pupils to learn from their mistakes so that errors are not repeated.
- Improve attendance, particularly for those pupils who are persistently absent.
- Improve early years by ensuring that:
 - staff use accurate assessment information to plan activities that meet the needs of

children in the Nursery and Reception

- transition arrangements between the Nursery Year and the Reception Year are improved so that children make better progress from their starting points
- staff provide sufficient challenge and raise their expectations of children's achievement
- staff are vigilant in managing risks so that children in the early years are well supervised and safe.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Over time, leaders have not halted the school's decline and as a result the school is failing to provide pupils with an acceptable standard of education. A high turnover of senior leaders has meant that poor performance has remained unchallenged. Staff morale is low, there has been considerable turbulence in staffing. Despite recent intervention from interim leaders to challenge poor performance, there remains much more to do.
- The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment is ineffective. Leaders have failed to provide teachers with the training and guidance that they need to improve, including newly qualified teachers. Consequently, teaching has not improved over time and too often is of poor quality.
- Leaders have failed to establish a reliable assessment system across the school. This has inhibited their ability to monitor pupils' progress and intervene to improve achievement. While recent efforts have attempted to track pupils' progress, information currently remains inaccurate and incomplete.
- The school's curriculum is weak. Leaders have failed to implement a curriculum that develops pupils' knowledge and understanding over time. There are huge inconsistencies in curriculum provision across the whole school. Consequently, leaders fail to provide equality of opportunity.
- The school's pupil premium strategy is not fit for purpose and leaders have not, therefore, used pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils effectively. Staff do not know which pupils are entitled to this support and do not make necessary adjustments to support disadvantaged pupils' academic and emotional needs.
- The leadership for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is ineffective. There has been too little purposeful support for pupils. Leaders have failed to ensure that staff support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to make strong progress. Until recently, the school's local offer and SEN policy were not in place.
- Middle leaders are ill-equipped to fulfil their roles. They have not had relevant training to help them lead their subjects. There is no strategy to improve standards at subject level and leaders have not monitored pupils' outcomes across the school. They have failed to notice the poor quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' weak outcomes. Leaders know that they must do more, but they lack the direction and skills to do so.
- Parents' confidence in the school is low. Most parents have little confidence in leadership and management over time, as the school has declined. While some aspects of the school's performance are beginning to show signs of improvement, which has provided some comfort to parents, serious failings across the school remain.
- External support has not resulted in improved school performance. The local authority and order acknowledge that the school's performance has declined but this awareness has not led to actions that have successfully addressed significant weaknesses.
- The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

- Leaders make appropriate use of sports premium funding. Recently, leaders evaluated the use of the sports premium and a clear plan was put in place. This has resulted in improved sports participation. Leaders now monitor the impact of their additional sport funding. Furthermore, staff have benefited from external support to help them improve their teaching of PE.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has not provided leaders with sufficient challenge to improve outcomes. High turnover of senior leaders has resulted in a lack of consistent information to drive improvement. As a result, governors have limited awareness of pupils' outcomes, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment or weaknesses in the school's safeguarding culture.
- Governors have not received training to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. A lack of stability in the membership of the governing body has resulted in some governors acknowledging that they 'don't know what [they are] supposed to know'. At the time of the inspection, the chair of the governing body had been in post for little over a week. Over time, the governing body has not provided the strategic direction to tackle areas of weakness and poor outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- The culture of safeguarding across the school is weak. Supervision of pupils is poor. Staff are not vigilant to risks and that places pupils at risk of potential danger. For example, staff do not consider the risks posed by leaving gates open, allowing children access to the main road. Staff do not sufficiently consider safe storage or use of equipment. Pupils are being placed at risk of harm and leaders cannot be sure pupils are safe at this school.
- Until recently, the school's recruitment processes have not been fit for purpose. Guidance on staff recruitment has not been followed. Checks to ascertain whether staff are suitable to work with children are incomplete. School leaders have failed to act to address weaknesses.
- The record-keeping of concerns about pupils is poor. Staff are not clear what to do when they have concerns about a child. Staff training has been lacking; for example, they are not aware of risks to children such as radicalisation or child sexual exploitation. Interim leaders' efforts to improve these systems have added some much-needed order, but there are still significant gaps.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching does not meet the needs of pupils effectively and fails to provide a sufficient level of challenge. Teachers do not consider assessment information closely when planning activities for pupils, particularly lower- and higher-attaining pupils. The work planned is either too difficult or too easy. Consequently, pupils make weak progress across a range of subjects.

- Teachers' assessments are not accurate. Tracking information does not take sufficient account of pupils' current knowledge and understanding. Teachers have a weak understanding of what next steps pupils should complete to make rapid progress and raise standards.
- Teachers do not deploy support staff effectively to promote pupils' learning. This limits the impact of support staff. In some classes, support staff contribute little to supporting the learning of pupils. As a result, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- The teaching of writing is poor. Teachers' expectations of pupils are too low. Teachers accept poor quality work and do not challenge basic errors that occur over time, particularly in pupils' writing. When key stage 2 pupils do not use capital letters and full stops, this goes unnoticed and unchallenged.
- The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is weak. Teachers expect pupils to complete mathematical activities when they have already demonstrated their ability to accomplish far more challenging calculations. Furthermore, teachers do not challenge poor presentation; for example, when pupils incorrectly set out digits in attempting column addition and subtraction. This results in pupils making errors when presenting their working out.
- Teachers do not pay sufficient account of the standards expected of pupils as they move through the school. In key stage 2, there is evidence of pupils completing work typically seen in Years 1 and 2. Homework does not challenge pupils to do their best. Too often, pupils receive homework that is too easy and covers learning they can already do.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Leaders cannot guarantee children's welfare because safeguarding is ineffective. Staff fail to prevent pupils' exposure to unnecessary risks. For example, staff do not supervise pupils adequately, which increases the potential for risk.
- Pupils are aware of how to stay safe online and can provide strategies for using the internet. However, the school's poor leadership of technology limits pupils' opportunities to apply these strategies.
- Teaching fails to enthuse pupils and promote positive attitudes to learning. Pupils openly share their dissatisfaction for certain lessons and do not feel motivated about their learning. In lessons, while many pupils are compliant there are some who 'switch off' and consequently learn very little.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils are mainly attentive in lessons, but on occasion they lose focus and disengage from activities. Where teachers' expectations are low, pupils disrupt each other's learning.

- Teachers' behaviour management is inconsistent. Some teachers fail to notice when pupils are not engaged in their learning. For example, in an outdoor lesson pupils wandered away from the activity, with little intervention.
- Leaders' procedures for promoting attendance are not having the desired impact. Too few pupils attend school regularly. Pupils' absence has increased this academic year. It is now above national averages. The number of pupils persistently absent from school has also increased, to double that seen in the previous academic year.
- Most pupils conduct themselves well when moving around the school. Inspectors agree with the views of pupils who state that behaviour across the school could be improved. Bullying instances are rare. When they do occur, adults deal with this effectively.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Current pupils make inadequate progress from their starting points. The proportion of pupils working at the expected and higher standards for their age has decreased over time in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is poor. Pupils have too few opportunities to develop their reasoning skills and problem-solving knowledge. Pupils are not challenged sufficiently. Too few are working at the higher standard.
- The most able pupils are not challenged and too often are presented with activities that slow their progress. In some cases, pupils communicate this to their teachers, but teachers do not act to provide more challenging work. Across the school the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards for their age has declined markedly from previous years.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check has declined by over 25% over the last three years. The proportion catching up and reaching the expected standard in Year 2 is below average.
- Lower-attaining pupils are not helped to catch up. For these pupils, they are not provided with the support they need; activities are too challenging and too often they find it difficult to tackle the activity. Consequently, pupils' progress is too slow and the gap between lower-attaining pupils and the rest of their cohort grows wider.
- Disadvantaged pupils make poor progress. In some cases, staff are unaware which pupils are eligible for the pupil premium funding. As a result, these pupils are not provided with interventions and activities to help them overcome barriers to learning.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have had little or no support, which has severely inhibited their progress. Interventions and support for these pupils lack precision and occur irregularly. Leaders have withdrawn pupils from some year groups without a clear strategy to meet their needs.
- Pupils' progress across the curriculum is underdeveloped. Opportunities for pupils to learn across a range of subjects is inconsistent. Pupils state that they wish they had more opportunities to develop techniques in art, while others crave opportunities to develop their historical and geographical knowledge. Pupils have large gaps in their skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum.

- Pupils are not suitably prepared for their next stage of education.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- Children are not safe in the early years. Adults do not supervise children closely enough. In some cases, children play outside with unobstructed access to the car park and main road. Adults are not vigilant enough in considering risks.
- The leadership of the early years provision is weak. Through a lack of training, leaders have not been supported to develop a full understanding of the demands of the role. Leaders do not monitor children's learning, nor ensure that appropriate support and guidance is available for those children working below expectations for their age. The improvement plan lacks rigour and fails to address weaknesses.
- The tracking of children's progress is inaccurate. Over time, adults have completed additional assessments at the beginning of the Reception Year, but these assessments fail to capture children's capabilities accurately and provide an overgenerous view of children's progress from their starting points.
- Transition arrangements from the Nursery to Reception are poor. Reception teachers do not make best use of the information they have about children's prior learning. Consequently, children's progress in Reception stalls.
- Too often, activities in the early years lack challenge. Activities on offer remain the same over extended periods so that children participate in activities that are too easy and do not engage and stimulate their interest or help them to make good progress in their learning and development. In some cases, adult interaction lacks focus; at times, adults step in too soon and intervene when not needed. This is particularly the case in the Nursery. Consequently, children rely too heavily on adults.
- Children's reading opportunities are varied. Staff provide some children with books to read that are inaccessible because they do not match their developing knowledge of letters and sounds. As a result, some children are not helped to make good progress in developing their early reading.

School details

Unique reference number	126482
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10048240

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	324
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Millard
Headteacher	Mary Barnard
Telephone number	01249 460231
Website	www.st-marys-pri.wilts.sch.uk
Email address	admin@st-marys-pri.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 February 2008

Information about this school

- Since April 2018, the school has been led by an interim headteacher, supported by the interim assistant headteacher.
- There have been considerable staff changes in recent years. During this academic year, the school has had four headteachers.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below national averages.
- The school is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils identified as requiring SEN support is well below national averages.
- The school is in the trusteeship of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God Order, in the Diocese of Clifton.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector met with representatives from the governing body, the local authority and the Catholic Diocese of Clifton.
- Inspectors met with leaders to scrutinise assessment information and progress of current pupils.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in each class. Inspectors also scrutinised a range of pupils' workbooks from Years 1 to 6. Inspectors visited Nursery and Reception classes and took account of children's learning journeys.
- Inspectors met with pupils from key stages 1 and 2 to gain their views of the school's work.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 69 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Inspectors also took account of 26 responses to the staff survey. During the inspection, several staff were keen to meet with inspectors to discuss their views. Inspectors took account of this.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding documentation and the school's single central register. Furthermore, inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding policies, procedures and culture to ascertain whether safeguarding is effective.
- Inspectors met with middle leaders, including those responsible for leading literacy and mathematics. Inspectors also met with the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), the sports premium lead and the early years leader. At the time of the inspection, there was no leader responsible for the pupil premium strategy. Instead, the SENCo met with inspectors to discuss the pupil premium strategy.
- Inspectors were unable to scrutinise the school's self-evaluation as there was none in place at the time of the inspection.

Inspection team

Nathan Kemp, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ross Newman	Ofsted Inspector
Marion Borland	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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