

St Mary and St Giles Church of England School

King George Crescent, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK11 1EF

Inspection dates

6–7 February 2019

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

- Safeguarding systems are wholly inadequate and do not ensure pupils' safety and welfare. Policies, practices, risk assessments and record-keeping are not fit for purpose.
- Until very recently, governors have not fulfilled their responsibilities for maintaining a high quality of education and safeguarding in the school. Insufficient challenge was offered to the previous headteacher. Standards have rapidly declined.
- Governors and senior leaders are not effective. They do not monitor the school's work closely enough on either of the two sites.
- Over time, staff have not had access to suitable training or support for the roles they are expected to undertake. Consequently, despite their dedication and commitment, many teachers' expectations are too low.
- Currently there are weaknesses in provision in mathematics and English across both sites of the school. The wider curriculum is ineffective.
- Leaders have an overview of the requirements for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, staff are not making sure that these needs are met in lessons. Pupils with SEND have made poor progress in the past and continue to do so.
- Assessment is infrequent and unreliable. Teachers do not adapt teaching quickly enough to prevent groups of pupils, including the disadvantaged and most able, from underachieving.
- Absence and persistent absence rates have risen and are above the national average figures. Records of pupils' attendance are inaccurate and there is a lack of oversight by senior leaders. Insufficient safeguarding checks have been made when children have left the school.
- Many parents have lost faith in the school and a high proportion are concerned about pupils' poor levels of progress and poor behaviour being unresolved.

The school has the following strengths

- Since January, external consultants and the local authority have shared with governors a more accurate view of the poor performance and safeguarding failings across the school.
- New leadership in early years has wasted no time in starting to improve provision in the Nursery.

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?

- Urgently review all aspects of safeguarding systems to ensure that:
 - reliable and accurate record-keeping enables all potential welfare and well-being concerns to be acted on promptly, appropriately and effectively
 - the single central record accurately records all appropriate checks have been made on staff, volunteers and governors to ensure that they can work with children
 - attendance, exclusions and behaviour records are fit for purpose.
- Improve governance, leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - comprehensive training supports leaders and governors in their roles, following a period where many have become deskilled
 - all staff have job descriptions for the roles that they undertake in the school
 - regular monitoring of teaching and performance management systems enables all staff to be held to account for the progress that pupils make
 - governors reliably monitor and evaluate safeguarding, risk assessment and recording systems
 - governors hold leaders to account to evaluate fully the impact of the pupil premium and sports premium
 - relationships with parents are strengthened to restore trust in the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching across both sites by ensuring that teachers:
 - have consistently high expectations of pupils' progress and make effective use of assessment to improve their planning
 - consider what pupils know and can do, providing teaching that builds on their knowledge and understanding and matches their needs across the curriculum
 - deploy support staff effectively to improve pupils' outcomes, particularly those pupils with SEND
 - are aware of the barriers to learning faced by disadvantaged pupils and plan learning to meet their needs
 - develop pupils' reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics
 - promote the development of reading and writing skills more effectively across the school.
- Improve attendance, particularly for those pupils who are persistently absent.

External reviews of governance and the school's use of the pupil premium should be

undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- The headteacher has been absent since last term and resigned the week before the inspection. The local authority brokered temporary interim leadership for the school from the Pepper Hill and Stanton Federation (PHSF) from the beginning of January to fulfil the headteacher's responsibilities. A team of experienced senior leaders from PHSF immediately identified a succession of serious safeguarding concerns and systemic underperformance across both sites of the school.
- Interim leaders took decisive action and wasted no time in arranging external audits of safeguarding and the school buildings and then alerting the local authority and diocese to their concerns. Due to the numerous issues identified, interim leaders and the local authority have identified that PHSF are unable to commit to the scale, depth and intensity of support required at St Mary and St Giles School in the long term. Currently, the local authority and diocese are urgently working to appoint a longer-term interim headteacher to take over the leadership of the school.
- Over recent years, leaders and governors have had limited engagement with outside training and staff development. Governors' weak monitoring and insufficient challenge of the previous headteacher has meant that they have overseen a decline in pupils' outcomes, attendance and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This, coupled with a catalogue of errors and omissions in safeguarding practices, indicates that leaders and governors do not demonstrate the capacity to bring about improvement in the future.
- The two deputy headteachers and several staff have not been provided with job descriptions for the different roles that they have been expected to do. Teachers have not had their work monitored effectively as there are no systems in the school to achieve this. Some teaching assistants and support staff report that they did not receive any training for their roles. At the time of this inspection, the local authority and diocese had just started work to introduce job descriptions and a performance management structure across the school.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are very variable. Too many pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education. Teachers and teaching assistants are hard-working and dedicated. However, leaders have failed to provide the training they need to meet the needs of pupils with different starting points. Consequently, pupils do not make strong progress in different subjects and in all year groups.
- The school's curriculum is poorly planned. Leaders have failed to ensure that the curriculum develops pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills across a range of subjects over time. Senior leaders have not ensured clear accountability structures or suitable training and support for middle leaders. Consequently, teachers have become deskilled. Weaknesses in planning and teachers' subject knowledge have led to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and curriculum provision across early years and key stages 1 and 2.
- Leaders' actions to address gaps in pupils' learning, particularly those of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, are ineffective. Teachers do not have sufficient

information about these pupils and their expectations of what these pupils can achieve are not ambitious enough. This means that these groups receive insufficient challenge. Similarly, leaders have not ensured that the work provided for the most able pupils is suitably challenging and so they do not do well enough.

- SEND funding is not being used effectively. While leaders have an awareness of pupils' specific needs and offer interventions, the school's own assessment arrangements for this group are imprecise. Pupils' books show that too few of these pupils make enough progress from their starting points.
- Leaders' use of the pupil premium funding is ineffective because the barriers faced by these pupils are not understood. There are no plans as to how to spend this funding. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils' outcomes are not rising and the differences between the achievement of this group and other pupils nationally are not diminishing.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium is not used effectively to offer a range of sports for pupils and the school has not engaged in local sports leagues. Recognising this, interim leaders have very recently employed professional sports coaches to support the delivery of higher-quality sports lessons. This has been welcomed by pupils and their parents.
- Over half of the parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and several parents whom inspectors met during the inspection, expressed concerns about the leadership of the school. They also expressed worries about pupils' behaviour, the progress that their children make and the quality and ease of communication between parents and staff. A significant minority of parents reported that their children were not happy at the school.
- The school may not appoint any newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- Governors have presided over a failing school. The governing body has not fulfilled its statutory safeguarding duties by checking that policies, practices and procedures are in place to ensure the safety of pupils.
- Governors come with a range of useful knowledge and experience from their business, pastoral and educational backgrounds. Several members of the governing body have worked in support of the school and the local community for many years. However, they have not ensured that they are up to date with their training. Consequently, over time, they have failed to adequately track or challenge the standard of education in the school.
- The governing body has not fulfilled its statutory safeguarding duties by checking that policies, practices and procedures are in place to ensure the safety of the pupils.
- Governors do not pay sufficient attention to ensuring a high enough standard of teaching and learning. They have not sought input from a broad enough range of external sources, parents or middle leaders within the school and relied too much on reports from the previous headteacher. As a result, they have not been sufficiently well informed to challenge the increasingly poor progress made by pupils over the recent years.
- Governors have not monitored the school's use of additional funding closely enough.

Consequently, the school's use of the pupil premium and PE and sports premium has been ineffective and not met the needs of the pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. There is a lack of vigilance across both sites resulting from inadequate leadership and insufficient training in the past.
- Governors and leaders have not ensured that the school implements procedures outlined in its own safeguarding policy or the latest government guidelines and legislation. This includes:
 - ensuring consistency and accuracy of recording all appropriate background checks on staff, volunteers and governors within a single central record
 - appropriate risk assessments to ensure that both school sites are safe and secure
 - maintaining detailed central records of the interventions to support vulnerable pupils including children missing education
 - ensuring that accurate and detailed attendance registers are kept
 - making sure that robust procedures are in place to ensure the welfare and appropriate curriculum provision for any pupils educated off-site for part of the week
 - ensuring that all teaching and support staff understand safeguarding reporting procedures.
- The school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) used to be the headteacher, who has now left the school. On each site the deputy headteachers received up-to-date training and acted as deputy DSLs. However, these deputy DSLs are not familiar with the school's child protection record-keeping systems, as the previous headteacher had exclusive access to them. Consequently, the school was not able to evidence that timely and effective actions had occurred to support the welfare and safety of vulnerable pupils over the last term.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. There has been insufficient moderation of pupils' work over time to enable staff to understand the progress that pupils are making. Staff work hard and are dedicated to the school and the children. However, many expressed their frustration to inspectors about their lack of up-to-date training. Staff morale is exceptionally low and many told inspectors that they felt undervalued. Some expressed that they had felt intimidated by senior leaders and governors in the past.
- Teachers in Reception and Years 1 to 6 do not take sufficient account of what pupils already know and can do when planning activities. Too often they fail to assess the quality of pupils' learning in lessons. Consequently, learning activities do not meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Pupils' books show that, over time in English and mathematics, the most able pupils are insufficiently stretched, while lower prior attainers and those with SEND fall further behind.
- The impact of teachers' questioning is variable. Where it is strongest, teachers use

their good subject knowledge and assessment skills to design engaging learning tasks and then use probing questions to challenge learners' understanding. As a result, pupils are motivated to engage with their work and improve their knowledge. However, most teachers' questioning of pupils across the school lacks depth and is less effective. Consequently, too few pupils are stretched sufficiently and many are easily distracted and lose concentration.

- Too few teachers deploy support staff effectively to promote pupils' learning. This limits the impact of these roles. In some classes, a lack of clear expectations from the teacher means that other adults contribute little to guiding pupils or addressing their misconceptions. As a result, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers' feedback to pupils is not effective in supporting pupils to make improvements to their work. Pupils' work shows that teachers frequently fail to correct misunderstandings or wrongly reward pupils' incorrect answers as being correct in English, mathematics and across the wider curriculum.
- The teaching of phonics in early years and key stage 1 is muddled because the approaches used lack consistency. Reading skills are not promoted well enough to ensure that pupils can access the key stage 2 curriculum. Consequently, pupils do not make enough progress in reading and writing across key stage 2.
- The teaching of science, humanities, technology and PE is weak. Over time there has been a lack of opportunity for subject leaders to monitor their subjects across the school. Teachers' limited subject knowledge in these areas mean that many tasks are too hard or too easy. Too frequently, pupils are not given an opportunity to apply their writing and mathematics skills in these subjects to produce their own independent work. Consequently, pupils' subject-specific vocabulary and thinking skills are not being developed well.
- Pupils learn about other cultures and religions in their religious education lessons and through regular assemblies. These provide pupils with opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development but there are limited opportunities for this across the wider curriculum. In recent years, the school has reduced the number of off-site visits and extracurricular clubs. This, together with the inconsistent quality of teaching across the school, means that the quality of pupils' experiences is very variable.

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 procedures, record-keeping and registration systems are ineffective. In addition, staff fail to prevent pupils' exposure to unnecessary risks. For example, staff had not taken appropriate action for two pupils with medical needs during the inspection. Parents informed inspectors that similar incidents had occurred on previous occasions and during a previous residential trip. Risk assessments are not carried out effectively to ensure pupils' safety during activities in classrooms and around the school.

- Pupils show an awareness of diversity and tolerance. They show respect for people from different faiths and cultures and told inspectors that, 'We should treat other people as we would like to be treated.'
- A high proportion of parents who responded to Parent View, and those parents that inspectors spoke to at the school gate, expressed concerns that their child did not always feel supported or well looked after at school. Approximately one half of parents felt that communication from the school needed to be improved and they reported that they would not recommend the school to others.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. There are inconsistencies in staff approaches to behaviour between the two school sites. A significant minority of pupils can be over-boisterous in open areas and in the playground. Almost half of the parents who responded to Parent View expressed concerns about bullying being unresolved. Parental letters and pupils themselves identified that this issue is worse on the north site than the south site.
- Leaders' record-keeping relating to exclusions is incomplete. There is little evidence of how pupils with challenging behaviours have been encouraged to value school and become included in its community. Case studies show that over recent years some pupils have been put on restricted timetables and parents of other pupils have been persuaded to take their children elsewhere. This has included disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. It is not clear that leaders ensured that these pupils' educational and welfare needs were met by these arrangements.
- In lessons, especially those which engage their interest, most pupils behave well and show respect for their teachers and for each other. However, when teaching doesn't engage their interest, some pupils can lose concentration, go off task and chatter.
- Rates of attendance to school have declined over the past three years and are now well below the national average. Leaders and governors have set attendance targets that are too low. Too many pupils simply do not attend regularly enough and so they do not make sufficient progress in their learning. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has rapidly increased. Approximately one quarter of pupils with SEND are persistently absent from school.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 was significantly below the national average in 2018. Interim leaders' analysis of last year's outcomes demonstrates that there were weaknesses on both the north site and the south site of the school. The progress that pupils made during key stage 2 in writing and mathematics was well below average.
- Disadvantaged pupils have made well below average progress for the last two years. There is no evidence that teaching has deepened or accelerated current key stage 2 pupils' skills in these areas.
- Last year in key stage 1, pupils' attainment was below national averages in reading,

writing and mathematics. Pupils' books show that that current progress is weak.

- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check dipped in 2017 but increased in 2018 and was broadly in line with the national average. However, inspectors' visits to lessons identified weaknesses in current phonics teaching and that reading is not promoted well in key stages 1 or 2.
- Key stage 1 and 2 pupils' books demonstrate that progress in writing and mathematics is limited because pupils are not sufficiently challenged. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils. Examples of work over time demonstrate that slow progress is being made in developing pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics. Similarly, age-related writing skills are not yet firmly embedded and pupils frequently make spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors.
- Across both school sites, pupils are not stretched sufficiently by their experiences in science and across the wider curriculum. Teachers' expectations are either too low or too high. Pupils' work shows that tasks and activities often do not reflect their different starting points. As a result, some pupils struggle to complete the work set while the most able pupils are insufficiently challenged.
- Teachers' planning and coverage of science and the foundation subjects are patchy. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop their subject-specific knowledge and skills and their progress over time in these subjects is weak.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- The early years provision is inadequate because safeguarding is ineffective across the school. In the early years, inspectors witnessed how ineffective risk analysis meant that not all children were able to use equipment safely and sensibly. Some potential trip hazards had not been identified and removed. During the second day of the inspection, Reception staff had not been sufficiently vigilant to respond appropriately to a child with medical needs.
- The leader for the early years only arrived at the school in January 2019. Already, she has an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in the Nursery and Reception classes and has improved the internal and external learning environment in Nursery. Recognising that key policies and risk assessments were missing from the Nursery, she quickly established these and developed a clear action plan for further development of the provision. As she has only been in post a few weeks, she has not had sufficient time to cascade these improvements to Reception.
- The quality of support offered by teaching assistants in early years is variable. While there are examples of very strong practice, in some cases teaching assistants do not monitor effectively to allay potential risks when children transfer between different activities.
- Outcomes in the early years have been weak in the past and the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception is below the national average. Currently, children's progress in their reading, writing and mathematics skills is inconsistent. While the curriculum in Nursery has improved and is now well-planned, this is not so evident in Reception. Therefore, children make less rapid progress in Reception than they do in Nursery.

- Children acquire the early skills of phonics because staff model sounds carefully, check on pupils' understanding and use appropriate tasks to advance children's learning.
- Children enjoy their learning and the many opportunities staff provide for them. Children are lively and engaged learners, who show kindness by sharing and cooperating well together.
- Relationships are nurturing and positive. Staff understand how to build children's self-esteem and confidence using praise and encouragement. However, they are not always vigilant enough to divert children from disruption or upset using positive strategies.
- The parents met by inspectors during the inspection were positive about how well they feel their child has settled in to early years. They feel involved in their children's learning because staff encourage parents to come in to read with the children on Fridays. One described her child as, 'blossoming and loving coming to school'.

School details

Unique reference number	110472
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10092782

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	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	423
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Ross Northing
Headteacher	Post vacant at the time of this inspection
Telephone number	01908 562186
Website	www.smsg.uk.com
Email address	office@smsg.uk.com
Date of previous inspection	8–9 December 2009

Information about this school

- St Mary and St Giles (SMSG) School is a large split-site primary school with nursery provision for children from 3 years old.
- At the time of the last inspection, the school was a junior school. The school merged with the former Queen Eleanor Primary School, on 1 January 2017. The former Queen Eleanor Primary School became SMSG south site and the former St Mary & St Giles Junior School became SMSG north site.
- The school provides a breakfast club on its south site.
- The early years incorporates a Nursery for three to four-year-old children, and a Reception class for four- and five-year-old children and is situated on the south site
- The school serves a diverse local community with a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is slightly above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is higher in key stage 1 than it is in key stage 2.
- At the time of this inspection, there was no headteacher in post. The previous headteacher had been absent from school since the previous term and then left the school on 31 January 2019.
- The local authority had brokered temporary interim leadership from the Pepper Hill and Stanton Federation (PHSF) from the beginning of January to the end of February to fulfil the headteacher role within the school. During the inspection, the local authority was working towards securing a longer-term interim headteacher to take over the leadership of the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 27 lessons and an assembly to gather evidence to contribute to the evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment. Most of these observations were conducted jointly with interim senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with interim senior leaders, the two deputy headteachers, members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority and Oxfordshire Diocese Board of Education.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning, heard a small number of pupils read and looked at their work across a range of subjects. They spoke to pupils on the playground, during lessons and inspectors met with a group of pupils on each site to gather their views.
- Conversations were held with some parents at the beginning of the second day of the inspection. The inspectors also considered the views expressed in 102 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the views represented in four letters from parents. Inspectors also took into account 36 responses to the staff questionnaire provided by Ofsted.
- A wide range of school documentation was scrutinised, including that relating to: policies, improvement planning, safeguarding, pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors reviewed the record of leaders' vetting and checks on the suitability of adults to work with pupils. A thorough scrutiny of leaders' safeguarding records and reporting was carried out and inspectors spoke to staff, governors and the local authority about safeguarding procedures in the school.

Inspection team

Matthew Newberry, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lesley Stevens	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Eardley	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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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