

Sutton Benger Church of England Aided Primary School

40 Chestnut Road, Sutton Benger, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 4RP

Inspection dates

26–27 February 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Over several years, the actions of leaders and governors have not been successful in improving the progress that pupils make. By the end of Year 6, pupils make less progress than their peers nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders' evaluation of the quality of education that the school provides has been overgenerous. This has meant that there has been a lack of urgency in tackling weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning.
- Leaders' plans are detailed but have not been precise enough to focus sharply on the areas that will lead to the improvements required. The consequent lack of clarity has meant that governors' monitoring of the work of the school has not been rigorous enough.
- Middle leaders are developing in their roles but are not fully confident in challenging practice that falls short of the standards expected.
- Teachers do not consistently plan and adapt lessons so that they are well matched to pupils' needs. This leads to pupils not reaching the standards of which they are capable. This includes the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Teachers' use of assessment is inconsistent. Misconceptions are often not identified and remedied swiftly. Consequently, errors continue, including in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

The school has the following strengths

- The head of school and recently appointed executive headteacher are reflective, capable and determined to get the school back on track.
- Pupils' conduct is positive. The Christian values that underpin the school are explicit, understood and demonstrated by pupils.
- Leaders' actions to ensure that pupils attend school regularly are effective.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - governors hold leaders better to account for the school’s performance
 - self-evaluation informs priorities for improvement so that all pupils make good progress
 - leaders sustain recent improvements and expectations, to eradicate the current weaknesses in teaching
 - senior leaders enable new leaders to develop their skills in supporting the drive for rapid school improvement.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - enabling teachers to develop their skills in using assessment information to plan and adapt their teaching so that it meets the needs of all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND
 - ensuring that teachers challenge the most able pupils to build on their skills
 - assessing pupils’ knowledge and understanding accurately to ensure that gaps in learning are reduced quickly
 - ensuring that pupils have a secure understanding of how to improve their work and apply this, including in their use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

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

Requires improvement

- There have been several changes in leadership over recent years. This has impeded leaders' ability to establish consistency and generate a momentum to improve the progress that pupils make. This is a concern shared by a significant minority of parents who responded to the Parent View survey.
- The head of school has provided continuity throughout this period. Following the departure of the executive headteacher, she was appointed to interim headteacher in November 2018. Her staunch professionalism, knowledge and commitment are real assets to moving the school forward. She is supported by a new executive headteacher, who was appointed in January 2019. Together, they are establishing a positive partnership and have quickly identified the areas and actions that are required to improve standards. They have made constructive changes to systems and processes, but it is too early to see the impact of this work.
- In the past, leaders have been over-optimistic in their evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Leaders have not recognised that the conclusions they have reached are out of line with the progress that pupils make. This has led to strategic priorities not taking account of the issues that have contributed to weaknesses.
- Subject leaders in English and mathematics are developing in their roles. They are knowledgeable in their subject areas and are beginning to appreciate their strategic importance. They have received training to develop their skills and are extending their networks to learn from practice elsewhere. However, middle leaders are not yet successful in bringing about school-wide improvement quickly enough because action planning is not specific enough. They are not yet insistent that teachers apply the agreed approaches or confident in holding their colleagues to account for improving pupils' progress.
- The interim headteacher has established effective systems to track pupils' progress. Teachers now meet regularly with leaders to discuss the standards that pupils have reached and to agree strategies that will support pupils who fall behind. Liaison with other schools and tighter internal verification has led to more reliable assessment. However, teachers do not routinely use this information to plan appropriate learning activities that are based on this knowledge of pupils' starting points.
- Leaders now have a greater strategic oversight of the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for pupils with SEND. The special educational needs coordinator is knowledgeable about pupils and has ensured that the personal, emotional and social needs of pupils are well met. Pupils now receive specific and timely intervention. However, targets are not always precisely matched to pupils' needs and pupils do not make the progress needed to reach the standards expected for their age. Teaching assistants provide effective support but teachers do not regularly build on the gains made in intervention sessions to secure longer-term improvement.
- Leaders have a clear rationale for the development of the curriculum. They understand the importance of pupils developing their understanding and skills in a wide range of

subjects. Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy learning about different topics. For example, they were particularly enthused by their science curriculum, investigating soil samples and exploring the effect of forces on their trip to a theme park. Visits enhance pupils' understanding, such as the recent trip to Cirencester to explore the legacy of the Romans. However, further work is needed to ensure that all teachers support pupils to develop secure knowledge, skills and understanding in a broad range of subjects.

- The sport premium is used well. Pupils enjoy a variety of sporting activities, such as Nordic walking. Leaders have ensured that all pupils are able to access and benefit from these activities. However, governors have not evaluated the effect of these activities on attainment or monitored participation rates.
- The Christian values that underpin the school are integral to the way in which pupils think and respond to each other. Displays in the library area promote these values and encourage pupils to appreciate their sense of worth. Pupils are invited to consider the 'science of happiness' and to celebrate the contribution that they make to the life of the school.
- In recent months, the local authority has identified that the school would benefit from additional support to increase the pace of improvement. Plans are now being formulated to provide leadership support and to implement a comprehensive plan to improve the quality of teaching.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not been effective in challenging the school's leaders to make the improvements needed quickly enough. They have relied too much on what senior leaders have told them. They have not had an accurate overview of the school's effectiveness, particularly in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Therefore, they have not asked probing questions or challenged whether leaders are taking the right actions and these are having the intended effect.
- Governors have recently made the decision to commission external reviews of the effectiveness of the school's work. This was because they were aware that it was difficult to reconcile the information provided by leaders with the progress that pupils make. Governors are now resolute in ensuring that they receive the information they need to challenge and support leaders.
- New governors have been appointed and have been supported by experienced governors so that they can question and challenge with more knowledge and confidence. However, the lack of clarity and cohesion between the self-evaluation process and the improvement plan means that it is still difficult for governors to hold leaders to account. Leaders have recognised this and are working to ensure that governors receive the information that will support them to fulfil their role effectively.
- Governors continue to cultivate positive relationships with staff and visit the school regularly. They are motivated and committed to securing future success. They recognise the improvements that are being made but understand the scope of the work that is still required. They understand that the pace of improvement needs to be quicker and are committed to making the right decisions to support the school in the future.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders make the necessary statutory checks and follow government guidance carefully to ensure staff are safe to work with children. All staff know how to apply child protection procedures. Relevant training is up to date and includes protecting pupils from exploitation and extremism. Staff are aware of the potential signs of concern and of those pupils who have medical needs. When referrals are made, record-keeping is diligent and the sequence of actions is clear. Leaders seek advice and work with external partners and parents to support pupils who are at risk.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and are well looked after by their teachers. The majority of parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, agree. Pupils speak positively about the personal, social and health education they receive. They have a clear awareness of how to keep themselves safe online and how to recognise risk in their everyday lives, such as when using the roads, particularly on their bicycles.
- The procedure for the breakfast and after-school clubs demonstrates the same vigilance as is seen elsewhere in the school. There is a secure signing in and out procedure. The staff who run these provisions have the necessary training to ensure that pupils are safe.
- Staff know pupils well and are nurturing and open. The school places great importance on successfully promoting pupils' emotional well-being. Pupils know that the 'Calm Corner' and 'Peace Garden' are there for them when they need time to pause and reflect.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable. This is because teachers do not direct pupils to activities that are well matched to their ability. There are examples of effective practice but typically teachers' planning is not directed well enough to pupils' starting points. This means that pupils are not moved on when they are ready so that they can extend their thinking and demonstrate a higher level of understanding. While leaders have a clear plan to increase pupils' autonomy and creativity, this is not yet consistently applied in classroom practice.
- Teachers do not routinely target and provide the right support for pupils who fall behind, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. Where teachers do not adapt their planning or identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills, misconceptions continue. This means that pupils do not have the solid learning foundations from which to build. Pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve the quality of their work, particularly in writing. Therefore, the rate of progress slows.
- Where teachers use assessment effectively and encourage pupils to reflect on their learning, pupils do this well. However, as this is not established practice, pupils are not yet skilled enough to use this time efficiently to improve the quality of their work and the potential gains are lost.

- Pupils read a range of appropriate texts for enjoyment. Pupils are enthusiastic about their reading and record this in their reading logs. At key stage 1, the majority of pupils develop their phonics skills to enable them to identify words accurately. Teaching assistants support pupils who fall behind and encourage them to talk about their reading. The most able pupils read with fluency and appropriate expression. Pupils continue to develop their reading skills throughout key stage 2, focusing on analysis, inference and prediction. Where teaching is effective, pupils clearly show an improvement in their skills. However, this practice is not yet sufficiently shared across the school and therefore pupils do not reach their potential.
- Pupils write for a variety of audiences and purposes, but the quality of their writing is too variable across all year groups. Where teaching is more assured, younger pupils demonstrate an ability to form letters and begin to write sentences with increasing complexity. Older pupils write in a range of genres and respond well to writing that arises from a variety of contexts and stimuli. On these occasions, pupils write in a sustained and engaging way, demonstrating a wide vocabulary and an ability to vary sentence structure for effect.
- Conversely, lower-ability pupils often lack an understanding of how to structure their writing effectively. Inaccurate spelling, punctuation and grammar hamper some pupils' ability to express their ideas successfully. When given the choice, pupils are inclined to choose work that lacks the necessary challenge and they are not directed to tasks that better suit their ability.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving and there is evidence of a more structured approach developing across the school. Where teaching is stronger, teachers' subject knowledge enables them to ask questions to explore pupils' methodology and to use mathematical language. Teachers use a range of strategies to build pupils' mathematical confidence and competence. The most able pupils are directed to tackle complex problems, so they become more secure mathematical thinkers. Those pupils who require support are helped to develop their mathematical skills at an appropriate level.
- Where the teaching of mathematics is weaker, teachers do not direct pupils to suitable starting points. Pupils are not encouraged to take on more complex problem-solving and reasoning tasks. Where teachers do not identify arithmetical errors, these continue. This limits pupils' ability to improve their mathematical fluency. Often, pupils' poor literacy skills hamper their ability to express their mathematical reasoning effectively.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are positive and enthusiastic. They model and demonstrate constructive learning habits. Therefore, pupils' attitudes to learning are strong and the classroom environment conducive to learning. Pupils want to learn and dutifully complete the tasks that teachers set. They interact and cooperate well, sharing ideas and providing peer support.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders are proud of their Christian distinctiveness. This is evident through vibrant displays and the positive relationships that exist. The curriculum is planned effectively to enable pupils to consider and develop their spiritual, personal and social understanding. Pupils understand the school's values and talk confidently about their current focus on 'justice'. Pupils spoke eloquently of what this means and related it to issues such as inequality and homelessness.
- Pupils understand concepts such as democracy, tolerance and respect, making them well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils explore different cultures and religions and celebrate diversity.
- Staff reinforce pupils' own sense of worth and belonging. The school prayer concludes with the statement that 'many hearts make a school,' and this epitomises the importance placed on pupils' wider development and emotional well-being. Pupils are encouraged to take care of their local environment through the 'Green Team'. They consider global issues and are aware of their social responsibilities, as demonstrated by their fundraising for charities such as 'Action Aid'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the site. They are proud of their school and demonstrate courteous manners. Their confidence and sense of security are reflected in their ability to initiate and sustain conversation with adults. Pupils understand expectations and are adamant that bullying is rare. They recognise how bullying is different from pupils 'falling out'. Pupils are confident that they have someone they can speak with if they have concerns. Pupils who have received additional emotional support say this has helped them to cope with situations that they have found difficult.
- Leaders maintain an overview of behaviour incidents during lessons and social time. They respond appropriately when there are concerns. For example, they have made changes to the playground so that all pupils can enjoy the outside spaces. When pupils become lively or over-animated within their games, they respond well to reminders from staff.
- Leaders have supported pupils who find behaviour expectations difficult to adhere to. Interventions are carefully matched to the needs of pupils. These are beginning to promote calmer and more positive attitudes from individual pupils. Staff involve parents and provide effective support, using external agencies when necessary. Consequently, exclusions are rare.
- Pupils told inspectors that they 'love school' and this is reflected in the fact that the majority of pupils attend school regularly. Leaders have developed effective systems to promote good attendance and evaluate patterns of absence. The rate of absence

continues to be below national averages.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 have been too variable over the last three years. In 2018, pupils did not perform as well as pupils nationally in reading and writing. Mathematics was stronger and above the national average. However, a smaller proportion of pupils than seen nationally demonstrated a higher level of understanding. Historical weakness in the teaching of writing mean that, although the school has identified improving this as a priority, current pupils still do not fulfil their potential.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in combined reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 improved and is now above the national average. This includes the proportion of pupils who demonstrated a greater depth in their understanding. However, from their starting points, pupils do not make enough progress by the end of key stage 2. This has been the case for the last three years. The continuing inconsistency in the quality of teaching means that current pupils are not yet making the progress needed to close the gaps that exist. Leaders' recent actions have yet to show compelling and sustained impact.
- The proportions of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium and pupils with SEND are small. However, over recent years these pupils have not met age-related expectations by the end of Year 2 or made enough progress by the end of Year 6. Current pupils are beginning to show improved progress, but this is slowed by the lack of consistent support.
- For the past two years, the progress that the most able pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics has been weak. Leaders have responded to this by developing approaches and formulating plans to provide current pupils with more complex tasks. However, teachers do not yet routinely direct pupils to work that will allow them to extend their thinking at a higher level.
- The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 is in line with the national average. Leaders have identified pupils who require additional support, and interventions are now in place. However, as pupils move through the school, their ability to apply this understanding is not always secure.
- The proportion of pupils who demonstrate a secure understanding of spelling, punctuation and grammar by the end of Year 6 has improved and is now above the national average. However, pupils of all abilities do not always demonstrate these skills when working independently.
- Leaders have a comprehensive overview of how well pupils are developing their knowledge, skills and understanding across a range of subjects. Leaders are aware of pupils who excel in different areas of the curriculum and seek to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their talents further.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children's knowledge, understanding and skills at the end of the Reception Year have been above the national average in recent years, including for those children who exceed expectations for their age. However, the quality of teaching, the features of the learning spaces and the accuracy of assessment require improvement.
- The early years leader is knowledgeable about the curriculum. She has identified writing as a focus but the plans to address this aspect of children's learning have not been implemented swiftly enough. Children do not yet have enough opportunities to develop their skills as emergent writers. They make slow progress from initial mark-making to forming recognisable letters and simple sentences.
- Opportunities within the learning environment are limited. The environment does not provide enough activities to contribute to high-quality independent learning to reinforce children's reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- Learning activities are organised but the learning purpose is not always clear or achieved. Where children need additional support to form their numbers or letters, they do not receive this in a timely way. This often leads to them drifting from the task and accomplishing little. The most able children are sometimes given tasks that do not provide challenge. When they finish quickly, they are not given the next steps that will build from what they already know. The school-wide weaknesses in the effectiveness of planning and the use of assessment are also evident in early years provision.
- Staff regularly assess children covering a wide range of activities which contribute to their physical and wider development. Assessments are now less observational and more focused on the progress that children make. However, there are inaccuracies which sometimes give an inflated assessment of children's competencies.
- The environment is nurturing and positive. Teachers and adults interact meaningfully with children and model language structures. Children sit together to 'snack and chat' and there are clearly established routines. Children with SEND are supported effectively. This has resulted in improved behaviour and a calmer environment to support children to learn effectively.
- Staff work successfully with parents to help them support their children's learning. Staff and parents communicate regularly and there are opportunities to share children's achievements. Parents meet with key staff and transition arrangements, including visits to pre-school providers and home visits, enable children to settle quickly.
- Safeguarding is effective, including provision of paediatric first-aid training.

School details

Unique reference number	126486
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10048241

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chairs	James Passmore and Tom Whittingham
Executive Headteacher	Luke Maddison
Telephone number	01249 720407
Website	www.suttonbenger.org
Email address	admin@suttonbenger.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	May 2009

Information about this school

- Sutton Benger Primary School is a smaller than average voluntary-aided school.
- The interim headteacher was appointed to this post in November 2018. An executive headteacher was appointed in January 2019.
- The school is part of the Hobbes Alliance, an informal collaboration of six primary schools.
- The majority of pupils are from a White British background. The school has six of the 17 ethnic groups.
- The number of pupils who have SEND is above the national average. The number of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is lower than the national average.
- The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average.

- Governors arranged a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools in July 2014. At that time, the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school were judged to be outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across a range of subjects and age groups and scrutinised pupils' written work. Observations were conducted jointly with members of the leadership team.
- Meetings were held with members of the leadership team and representatives from the governing body. In addition, inspectors met with curriculum and pastoral leaders. The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, both formally and informally, to discuss their views about their experience of school.
- Inspectors looked at the school's documentation, including the evaluation of the school's effectiveness and priorities for future improvement. Inspectors reviewed progress, behaviour and attendance information relating to current pupils, and governors' records.
- School policies relating to safeguarding, pupils' behaviour, the use of additional funding, including the pupil premium and the sport premium, and the curriculum were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour before school, in lessons, at lunchtime and breaktimes and around the school site.
- Inspectors listened to a selection of pupils read.
- Inspectors considered the 78 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. A letter that was sent to the lead inspector was also considered.
- Inspectors visited the breakfast and after-school clubs.

Inspection team

Sarah McGinnis, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Shears

Ofsted Inspector

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