

Ruardean Church of England Primary School

School Road, Ruardean, Gloucestershire GL17 9XQ

Inspection dates

19–20 March 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	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have made some progress in tackling the areas for improvement from last year's inspection. However, teaching remains too inconsistent across classes. As a result, some pupils underachieve in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Governors are too accepting of the information they receive. They do not challenge leaders rigorously enough about the school's performance, including in the Communication and Interaction (C&I) centre.
- Leaders' strategic overview of the timetabling of teaching time is not good enough. Leaders have not ensured that pupils receive the same quality of experiences across mixed-age classes. Learning time is not fully maximised.
- Teachers do not use all the information they have to plan work that is closely matched to pupils' needs. Sometimes, pupils are moved on in their learning too quickly when they do not fully understand the concepts being taught.
- The curriculum is not demanding enough across a range of subjects. Middle-attaining and most-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged, particularly in writing. Consequently, pupils become distracted or overly passive and do not achieve their full potential.
- Senior and middle leaders' checks on teaching are not precise enough. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not make consistently good progress. Disadvantaged pupils' progress in reading is improving. However, this is not evident in writing and mathematics.
- Teaching assistants' support, including in the early years, is too variable. In some classes, their precise support enables pupils to catch up well. In other classes, children and pupils do not get the support they need to make good progress.
- Safeguarding is effective. However, leaders' record-keeping is not as precise as it should be.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders' actions and staff training have improved the quality of mathematics teaching.
- Leaders' actions to improve pupils' persistent absenteeism are having a positive impact.
- The teaching of early reading and phonics has improved markedly. As a result, most pupils in the early years and key stage 1 use and apply their phonics skills to read accurately.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the governing body takes action to respond to the governance and pupil premium reviews so that they strengthen the way in which they hold the leaders to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, particularly for pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged
 - the deployment of teaching assistants is consistently good
 - inconsistencies in provision across mixed-age classes are eradicated
 - leaders' record-keeping is consistently strong
 - teaching time is used to its maximum in every class across the school day
 - teachers receive clear communication about what they need to do to improve their teaching so that it is consistently good.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including in Reception, by ensuring that:
 - teaching builds on what pupils know, can do and understand, and ensures that pupils make consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics
 - middle-attaining pupils and pupils with SEND receive work that is closely matched to their needs and catch up
 - teaching challenges the most able pupils consistently well
 - the teaching of writing is consistently good, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have previously underachieved, so that pupils' catch-up sessions are no longer required
 - teaching in the C&I centre is closely matched to pupils' needs and ensures that pupils make consistently good progress from their different starting points.
- Improve pupils' personal development and welfare by ensuring that:
 - low-level distractions in lessons and in pupils' compliance are minimised
 - pupils' attendance continues to improve so that it is at least in line with the national average.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses but they have not yet been successful in remedying the weaknesses from the previous inspection in full. Leaders have taken robust action to tackle many weaknesses. However, they have not checked their work, including improving the quality of teaching and learning, sufficiently well.
- Senior and middle leaders have provided staff with a considerable amount of training over the last year. This has proved successful in improving the teaching of phonics and early reading, and in mathematics. Staff training to improve the quality of writing is ongoing and needs more time to become embedded.
- Leaders have instigated new systems to hold teachers to account for improving pupils' achievement. For example, class action plans, regular reviews of pupils' workbooks and detailed professional discussions about the small-group intervention teaching are beginning to make a discernible difference. However, much of this work is too recent to ensure that those pupils who have previously underachieved have caught up in full.
- Leaders have recently commissioned a pupil premium review. The pupil premium is not used precisely enough to enable disadvantaged pupils to make strong progress over time. Pupils receive caring support. However, the interventions in place are not having the desired impact on pupils' progress in writing and mathematics.
- Almost every parent and carer who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school. However, a minority of parents raised concerns about the provision for pupils with SEND.
- The leadership of support for SEND is not fully effective. There has been too little monitoring and checking of the academic progress and teaching provision pupils receive. As a result, pupils with SEND, including those in the C&I centre, make progress that is too inconsistent over time.
- The sport premium is used effectively. It has enabled better participation in a wide range of sports locally. Pupils are also more physically active at lunchtimes.
- The curriculum provides wide-ranging experiences for pupils across a variety of subjects. Pupils particularly enjoy the forest school. However, workbooks indicate that learning in subjects other than English and mathematics is variable in content and presentation in a few classes.
- Leaders' strategy to teach Reception and Years 1 and 2 together in some afternoons is not fully effective. Teachers do not ensure that the teaching on offer meets pupils' wide range of abilities well enough. Leaders have not picked up this weakness with enough rigour. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should at these times.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences. Pupils' involvement in the community has helped raise money for a range of charities and good causes. Pupils' voice is valued by staff. However, pupils spoken to feel that school council meetings could be even more effective.

- Leaders' actions are effective in ensuring that this is a highly inclusive school with a strong sense of community. It has a strong 'family feel'.
- The local authority has provided a full range of external support. Leaders welcome this support. They are using the knowledge and skills they have gained to build momentum in bringing about sustained whole-school improvement with increasing success.

Governance of the school

- Governors have embraced a comprehensive package of training from the local authority. As a result, governors are strengthening the way they measure the success of school improvement initiatives. They have ensured that middle leaders' roles and responsibilities have been defined successfully and a full training package has been put in place to develop middle leaders' knowledge and skills.
- Governors are fully committed to remedying the weaknesses in the school's performance. However, they remain too accepting of the information they receive from leaders and this makes it difficult for them to gain and use the information they need to challenge effectively.
- Governors recently commissioned a review of the impact of their work and a pupil premium review. This has provided clarity about the school's current performance. However, governors' challenge has not yet brought about the improvements required to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff training is up to date. The school's recruitment checks of new staff are in line with national requirements to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children.
- The designated leaders of safeguarding act swiftly to make referrals and work well with external agencies should they consider that a child is at risk of harm. Staff know how to apply the school's safeguarding policy to make referrals should they have concerns about pupils' well-being. Referrals are followed up quickly by designated safeguarding leaders. However, some aspects of the school's safeguarding record-keeping require strengthening.
- Staff and pupils are vigilant in their awareness of keeping safe on the split site. The school's risk assessments are kept up to date and staff training is applied well to minimise risk. Pupils say they feel safe and adults care for them well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching over time has not resulted in pupils making sufficiently strong progress. Leaders' actions to improve staff subject knowledge and skills are beginning to remedy the weaknesses in teaching that were identified at the school's previous inspection. This is most effective in mathematics and in reading at key stage 1. However, teaching remains too inconsistent across the school, particularly in writing.
- Leaders' actions have ensured that teachers' assessments are mostly accurate.

However, there remain some inconsistencies in the way that teachers assess pupils' understanding in key stage 2. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Teaching does not challenge middle-attaining and the most able pupils in writing and reading sufficiently well.

- Nevertheless, pupils' workbooks show that teaching is having better impact this year. However, pupils who have previously underachieved still have gaps in their knowledge and skills, and so catch-up sessions are required.
- The teaching of writing is too inconsistent over time. Pupils are not expected to develop or extend their writing. Too few pupils use complex sentence structures accurately. As a result, too few pupils write with the knowledge and complexity expected for their age. Few pupils exceed this standard. This means that pupils do not make good progress in writing over time.
- The deployment of teaching assistants is not good enough in a few classes. Some additional support is precise and deepens pupils' understanding well. However, while teaching assistants provide caring support in some classes, their support and intervention are not enabling pupils to make good progress over time, particularly in key stage 2.
- Teaching for pupils with SEND is too variable. Pupils do not have access to tasks that ensure that their learning needs are met sufficiently well. Consequently, these pupils, including some pupils in the C&I centre, do not make strong progress from their different starting points.
- Planned interventions are precise and focused on pupils catching up this term. They are particularly successful in developing pupils' fluency in mathematics and pupils' accuracy in their reading. However, much of this work is recent and needs time to become embedded. As a result, while pupils are showing early signs of catching up, some pupils still have gaps in their skills and knowledge. Intervention sessions are not monitored closely enough. Consequently, some pupils still 'slip through the net', particularly in their writing development. This limits pupils' ability to expand their ideas and writing.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving across the school. All aspects of the mathematics curriculum are planned for and taught increasingly well. Teachers have been successful in developing their subject knowledge because of the training they have received. However, in mixed-age classes, some pupils are moved on too quickly before they have secured their understanding of the concepts taught. On occasions, teaching content changes significantly midway through a lesson and this limits pupils' opportunities to practise and deepen their understanding. As a result, pupils' gaps in their understanding persist.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The curriculum does not enable pupils to demonstrate perseverance in their learning. Sometimes, pupils work through tasks that are too easy before tackling work that is

challenging enough. Teachers do not pick up when pupils are slow to get started on their work or do not grasp the concepts taught. Consequently, some pupils do not make the progress they should.

- Pupils enjoy lunchtimes and benefit from a range of equipment to play with. Lunchtime staff supervise social times well. They encourage pupils to play with one another and use a full range of equipment outside.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and well looked after. They say that, if bullying happens, it is followed up by staff and resolved over time. However, some pupils commented that, while teachers and adults provide strong care and support, they do not sort out minor issues consistently well when they arise.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Leaders' work to ensure that pupils' attendance improves is having a positive impact. The family support worker works in close partnership with external agencies to challenge and support families so that pupils' attendance improves. As a result, the vast majority of pupils who have been persistently absent in the past have improved their attendance markedly. However, pupils' attendance remains below the national average overall.
- Most pupils are well mannered and polite. However, when teaching is not closely matched to pupils' needs, their concentration diminishes or they become passive and their learning is hindered. Leaders and teachers do not respond to this quickly enough.
- Pupils take part in whole-school events with enjoyment, such as singing in assembly. They play well together at lunchtimes and most pupils behave well in the dinner hall.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupil numbers are small and vary considerably over time. The numbers of pupils who join the school part way through their schooling are higher than average. As a result, some published performance data does not give a full and accurate summary of the school's performance.
- In 2018, pupils at the end of key stage 2 made average progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This was an improvement on the previous two years, when pupils' progress in mathematics was significantly below that of other schools.
- Current pupils continue to make strong progress in mathematics this year. However, better teaching is not yet enabling pupils who have previously underachieved to catch up in full in all year groups. As a result, some pupils still have gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding in mathematics.
- Too little focus on teaching the most challenging concepts in the English curriculum prevents some pupils from being exposed to work that would enable them to reach the highest standards. Boys do less well than girls in some year groups. In key stage 2, the teaching of reading does not challenge middle-attaining and the most able pupils sufficiently well. Inconsistencies in assessment practices and too little focus on deepening pupils' understanding of the texts they read hinder pupils' progress overall.

- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged varies from year to year. However, disadvantaged pupils across the school do not make consistently good progress in writing.
- Historically, pupils' achievement in key stage 1 has been below the national average. Better teaching this year means that pupils are catching up. Most pupils make sufficient progress in mathematics. However, this is not yet fully replicated in their writing.
- Pupils make strong progress in reading at key stage 1. The proportions of pupils meeting the standards that are required in the phonics screening checks in Year 1 have increased markedly in 2018 to be in line with the national averages. Current pupils' progress in phonics is strong. Pupils in key stage 1 master the phonics code quickly and become fluent and accurate readers.
- Pupils enter Year 1 with strong levels of spoken language because of the effective oracy teaching in Reception, which develops children's ability to use story language well. Consequently, many pupils write with stamina and have good ideas for their writing. However, pupils do not consistently develop accurate spelling and writing structure because teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in key stage 1 are not sufficiently strong.
- Pupils with SEND, including those in the C&I centre, make inconsistent progress in reading, writing and mathematics over time.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The proportions of children reaching a 'good level of development', the standards that are expected for their age, have been below the national averages for a number of years.
- Teaching in the early years is improving steadily. The teaching of phonics is systematic and precisely focused on what children already know. Teaching covers all areas of learning. Teachers make every effort to bring activities to life and have a real purpose. For example, children visit the snack shop and buy healthy snacks with real money. This teaches them the concept of money and change, and encourages them to take turns and build relationships well.
- Early years provision is inconsistent at different times of the day and week. For example, small-group teaching is well focused in the morning sessions. However, the teaching arrangements in some afternoons do not meet children's needs well enough. The headteacher has not had a clear enough oversight of the effectiveness of the full school day or the impact of adult support on children's learning. As a result, the current inconsistencies in the early years provision, including when children are in mixed-age classes, have not been remedied quickly enough.
- Adults do not use their assessments of what children already know to ensure that teaching is closely matched to children's needs. Adults' interactions do not help children move forward in their learning consistently well. This is not routinely picked up by teachers. As a result, children who have knowledge and skills below those expected for their age do not make the progress they should.
- On occasions, activities limit children's capacity to practise and deepen their

understanding. Activities do not challenge the most able children well enough.

- Children experience a full range of activities, including the forest school. This encourages children to gain independence and develop teamwork.
- Teachers provide caring support and ensure that children foster positive relationships with one another. As a result, children enjoy school.

School details

Unique reference number	115647
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10053004

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ceri Benwell
Headteacher	Simon Manning
Telephone number	01594 542 461
Website	www.ruardeancofefprimaryschool.com
Email address	head@ruardean.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 March 2018

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- There is a C&I centre on the school site for 10 primary-aged pupils.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is just above the national average.
- Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who receive SEND support is just above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is considerably above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in visits to lessons across the school, including the

C&I centre. Inspectors reviewed pupils' work in books across a range of subjects. The inspection team worked in close partnership with leaders to review pupils' progress and provision over time.

- Inspectors talked with a group of pupils to seek their views about the school. Inspectors also listened to the views of many pupils during lessons and lunchtimes. Inspectors listened to pupils from Years 2 and 6 reading.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the leader of provision for SEND and middle leaders in the school. Inspectors met with representatives of the local authority and held a meeting with three members of the governing body.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of school documents, including: the school's action plans; the school's view of its own performance; pupils' performance information; governors' minutes; records relating to behaviour; checks on teaching and learning; pupils' attendance information; and a range of safeguarding records.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at social times and around the school.
- Inspectors considered seven responses to the online survey, Parent View. An inspector also talked with parents during the inspection to seek their views of the school and of the education their children receive.

Inspection team

Julie Carrington, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tracy French

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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