

St James and Ebrington Church of England Primary School

Pear Tree Close, Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire GL55 6DB

Inspection dates

9–10 July 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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Deep-rooted tensions in the community have existed for some time. These tensions, which stem from the use of two sites for the school, have restricted the school's improvement.
- Weak teacher assessment means that work does not match pupils' learning needs closely enough. This slows pupils' progress. Sometimes, there is insufficient challenge, especially for the most able pupils.
- Subject leadership is at an early stage of development. Subject leaders do not drive improvements to pupils' outcomes.
- Staff absences during the year have presented additional challenges to governors and the current leadership team as they seek to improve the quality of teaching and learning, which are not good enough.
- Children in Reception and pupils in other year groups do not achieve as well as they should. At times, the curriculum has been narrowed, in an attempt to ensure that pupils make gains at specific times leading to assessment points.
- The identification of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has been flawed in the past.

The school has the following strengths

- The local authority provides strong support and has put in place an interim leadership team. These leaders promote high expectations for pupils and a professional approach towards teaching and learning.
- Current leaders are accurate in their view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are rightly challenging the areas of weak achievement that exist across the school.
- Pupils are proud of their school and attend well. Strong, respectful relationships based on shared values provide a secure environment in which to learn. Pupils behave well.
- The newly formed governing body is determined to draw the community together, so that, as one group, all can focus on doing what is right for pupils at the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the school community comes together to solve deep-rooted issues, so that leaders are able to focus on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - the newly introduced systems to check the quality of teaching and learning continue to be embedded further
 - the work of subject leaders makes a positive difference to pupils' progress
 - the curriculum plan is reviewed to ensure that pupils receive a broad and balanced learning experience
 - pupils with SEND are accurately identified and receive appropriate high-quality support from teachers and teaching assistants that enables them to make good progress
 - leaders ensure that their new system for assessing the progress that pupils make in each year group is used effectively by teachers.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that:
 - teachers make accurate assessments based on what pupils know, understand and can do and use these to plan challenging lessons that help to move pupils forward in their learning
 - lessons are planned to match pupils' needs more closely
 - expectations of what pupils can achieve are high, so that pupils in all year groups make good progress, whatever their abilities.
- Improve outcomes for children in Reception and pupils higher up the school by ensuring that:
 - by the end of early years, more children are ready for Year 1 and have the skills and knowledge they need to thrive
 - leaders and teachers identify any weaknesses in achievement quickly and make the changes needed, so that pupils make good progress throughout the school
 - more of the most able pupils reach higher standards.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The interim executive headteacher and her leadership team have accurately identified that pupils' achievement is not good enough, and that tackling the weaknesses in teaching, learning and assessment must be their top priority. This has been their focus this year. Leaders have developed high-quality action plans that precisely identify priorities and the actions needed. Leaders provide clear messages to staff about their expectations of what good-quality teaching and learning look like.
- The leadership team is working effectively to improve pupils' outcomes. However, the interim executive headteacher has been very careful to maintain existing aspects that work well. Pupils continue to be well cared for and kept safe. Strong values such as respect, forgiveness, trust and friendship remain at the heart of the school's work.
- The frequent high-quality feedback and professional guidance for staff provided by leaders are starting to result in improvements to teachers' planning and to the quality of work seen in pupils' books. However, long-term staff absences and staff changes mean that progress is variable across the school. There have been periods of low morale, as staff adapt to the many changes. However, there is a real sense of optimism in the school now, as these changes start make a difference to pupils' achievements.
- Performance management systems have been robustly applied this year. Leaders are not afraid to challenge and to tackle underperformance, in their aim to secure the best possible outcomes for pupils.
- Despite being an area for improvement at the previous inspection and listed again in the next steps in the recent short inspection, subject leaders' roles are currently under development. Staff changes mean that roles and responsibilities are yet to be embedded. Subject leaders' and other middle leaders' roles are not sufficiently secure to ensure that pupils' progress improves across subjects and classes.
- The curriculum includes the identification of how skills in different subjects will be developed across the school. However, historically, some subjects, such as computing, art and physical education (PE), have had their time allocation reduced so that core subjects such as reading, writing and mathematics have more lesson time. This has been in an attempt to ensure that pupils have the skills they need to be successful at key assessment times, such as the end of key stage 1 or key stage 2. Pupils themselves say that they would like to do more subjects such as art, history, geography and PE, and to do them more often.
- Leaders are currently reviewing the available information for pupils with SEND to ensure that their needs are accurately identified. This is because, on occasion, staff have just assumed that some pupils who have fallen behind have a specific special educational need. Leaders' analysis shows that some of these pupils actually have gaps in their learning due to gaps in teaching in the past. Leaders are working to put this right and are ensuring that pupils have extra catch-up sessions to support their learning, if that is what they need.

- This has been a challenging year for the school. Parents' views about the changes and the impact these are having on their children are mixed. Some welcome the differences being made, as they see that the quality of teaching is starting to improve. Others are concerned about the number of staff changes and the impact this may have on the ethos of the school. Many particularly value the strong nurture and care that the school provides for pupils.
- Leaders ensure that additional funding is used well to provide support for pupils. The sport premium has enabled the PE leader and a sports coach to support teachers across the school and equip them with the skills needed to teach PE well. After-school clubs include some for less confident pupils, to encourage wider physical activity.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive extra support in reading, writing or mathematics as they need it, and this is identified on recently introduced 'pupil profiles'. Pupils with SEND have individual plans. These have been reviewed, and, as a result, pupils' targets are far sharper and more precise. The weaknesses in assessment across the school mean that leaders are not able to evaluate accurately the impact that extra resources have on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils or for pupils with SEND.
- At a time when there has been significant staff absence, while improvements still need to be made, the local authority and diocese have provided effective ongoing support and challenge to leaders. Extra support from local schools has been identified for specific tasks. For example, a local leader comes into the school to support the development of assessment. Local authority advisers frequently meet with leaders and governors to check and challenge the progress being made.

Governance of the school

- There have been significant changes to the governing body, and there is a renewed sense of moving forward. An action plan is in place, following a review of governance which the governing body commissioned so that they could understand their strengths and areas to improve. This was a sensible move. Governors have the experience and skills needed to provide strong strategic leadership. They share a strong determination to secure improvements, so that the school provides a good education for all pupils, at both the St James and the Ebrington sites.
- Governors ensure that they have detailed information about aspects of the school, including having sight of the regular reviews and meetings organised by the local authority. The quality of the information provided is starting to enable them to fulfil their role of providing challenge to leaders more effectively. However, weaknesses in subject leadership and in assessment mean that governors do not have precise information to be able to ask more searching questions about the progress that pupils make across year groups or subjects.
- Governors have needed to make some tough decisions linked to finances that have had an impact on staffing structures in the school. This has, unfortunately, further contributed to current low staff morale.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The interim executive headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, brings a wealth of experience and knowledge about safeguarding procedures and systems. This has helped to review and improve practices, including record-keeping. Leaders ensure that staff have the training and information they need to be able to keep pupils safe. Staff are secure in their knowledge about signs to notice and how to report any concerns they may have. Leaders ensure that concerns are passed on quickly and that any other agencies that can offer support are communicated with. Leaders are not afraid to challenge, if they do not get the support for families they think is needed.
- Recruitment processes and procedures are secure and well organised, and governors fulfil their responsibilities to make checks on safeguarding, including recruitment systems.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Many changes to the planning, teaching and assessment of lessons have taken place this year, particularly over this term. These are starting to raise expectations, as seen in lessons and in books. Pupils are responding well to the higher expectations. They enjoy being challenged to think for themselves more often. They also enjoy applying the skills they have to other subjects. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoyed the challenge of using their knowledge of phonics to help them make up funny poems.
- Teachers have generally responded positively to the improvements and feedback provided by leaders. For example, more structured approaches to the teaching of phonics have led to improvements in the quality of teaching in phonics. Other areas, such as developing pupils' mathematical understanding, are taking longer to secure. This is due to the underdeveloped subject leaders' roles and changes in staffing.
- The focus this year has been to improve the quality of teaching, with a particular emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics. Other curriculum subjects, although planned for and taught, do not enable pupils to develop, deepen and retain their knowledge and vocabulary in that subject. For example, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils struggled to explain what they had actually learned in topics they covered last year.
- As with the quality of support offered to pupils by teachers, the support offered by teaching assistants is mixed. At times, pupils have such a high level of support that they are not able to show what they already know, can do and understand for themselves. Therefore, they sometimes have work that is too easy for them. This sometimes includes pupils with SEND.
- New 'pencil targets' support a closer match of work to pupils' needs, and this can be seen in pupils' books. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this over time.
- Although early reading skills are now being better supported through improvements to phonics, there is not an agreed approach to the teaching of reading for older pupils. As a result, the teaching of reading is haphazard and varies from class to class. This is currently being researched by leaders.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are confident and self-assured. They have positive attitudes to their work and cope with any staff changes maturely. Most pupils present their work with pride. However, because of the mixed expectations in teaching, there is variation in how well work is presented across the school. Some say that their work could be harder at times and that they would like to study a wider range of topics for longer.
- The religious education curriculum supports pupils to develop their understanding of British values and they can talk about these to adults with confidence. Pupils are excited about the rewards for upholding values and for representing their school. In addition, the social, moral, spiritual and cultural themes permeate the school curriculum. As a result, pupils develop a strong appreciation of how to respect and tolerate others.
- Pupils say they feel safe at the school, and they are safe. They are extremely confident that any friendship issues related to bullying will be sorted out quickly by staff in the school. Most parents and carers who gave a view agreed that staff are approachable and easy to discuss concerns with. Visitors to the school contribute to pupils' understanding about how to keep themselves safe. For example, local police officers support pupils to understand the dangers online.
- Pupils talk proudly about their school and say that they enjoy being in a school 'where we know each other very well'. Year 6 pupils are not daunted, however, about moving on to a bigger school next year. Their self-confidence shines through.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Exclusions are very rare.
- Pupils behave well during lessons and at other times during the school day. They listen well to adults and respond quickly to instructions.
- Staff support pupils' developing sense of responsibility for others, by making sure that pupils take on helpful roles. For example, some older pupils support lunchtime staff, acting as playground leaders for younger children. Some help to run lunchtime clubs such as yoga or 'planking'. Lunchtime staff say that these responsibilities have helped younger children to engage more with their play.
- Pupils enjoy the school and overall attendance and punctuality are good. They feel well looked after by adults and the majority express no concerns about behaviour. This view is supported by the majority of parents.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The small numbers of pupils in each year group mean that comparisons with national data should be used with caution. However, pupils' books show that weaknesses and variabilities in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have led to too many

pupils not making good progress throughout their time at the school

- By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, some pupils achieve well. However, progress in reading and mathematics between key stages 1 and 2 over recent years has been weak.
- Pupils' books show that higher expectations and new teaching strategies are now starting to make a difference to the progress that pupils make in mathematics and writing. The consistent approaches help pupils to develop their mathematical knowledge and their understanding of the technical aspects of writing. However, planning to ensure that pupils learn to apply their writing skills remains variable in quality.
- While expectations are similar in writing books and other subjects, progress in subjects such as computing, science, geography and history is variable. Too often, learning in subjects is not organised well into sequences that build and deepen pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils do not securely retain the knowledge from these lessons.
- Staff have responded well to the new marking and feedback policy. Current pupils improve their work from feedback provided by teachers. In addition, 'pencil targets' help pupils to understand the next small steps they need to improve the quality of their work.
- Outcomes in phonics have been good in recent years. Leaders' new approaches to the teaching of phonics mean that pupils have an even deeper, more secure understanding of letters and the sounds they make.
- Most pupils read often, and there are plenty of reading resources available. However, due to a lack of a consistent approach to the teaching and assessment of reading, progress is variable.
- Weaknesses in assessment of the progress that pupils make have made it difficult for leaders to identify patterns in progress across subjects, year groups or for specific groups, such as pupils with SEND, the most able or disadvantaged pupils. Improved procedures to hold teachers to account for the progress that pupils make have been introduced, but too recently to see the impact on pupils' progress over time.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Leaders have an accurate view of the areas that need further improvement. However, staff absences have meant that there have been unavoidable changes to staff in the Reception class at the St James site during the year. This has hampered leaders' efforts to make improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Children have opportunities to learn about the world around them, through interesting visits, particularly to places of worship, and taking part in special events in the school. However, these are not used well as learning experiences on which to build new skills. Too frequently, activities are not matched well to the learning needs of children.
- Assessment practices, as seen in other parts of the school, are weak. This means that staff do not make good use of what children already know, understand and can do and use this information to plan further activities. Evidence over time shows that children

often spend time completing tasks that do not move them forward.

- As a result, outcomes for children require improvement. From generally strong starting points, too few children make good or better progress during their Reception year. Therefore, some children do not achieve the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in Year 1. Too few reach a good level of development by the end of Reception.
- There is evidence in learning journeys and other examples that, more recently, teachers plan activities to match agreed targets for children. Where this has happened, better progress and better-matched work can be seen. However, this has not been in place over a sufficient amount of time to make a significant difference to the achievements for children.
- Staff are caring and ensure that children are safe. Statutory safeguarding requirements and welfare checks are in place. Children develop positive attitudes and they enjoy the school. Children behave well, show respect for others and try their best in their activities.
- Parents are generally positive and appreciate being able to contribute celebratory messages about their child's achievements.

School details

Unique reference number	115713
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10091029

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Katrina Scott
Headteacher	Alexandra Symondson
Telephone number	01386 840634
Website	www.stjamesandebringtonschool.org.uk
Email address	admin@stjeb.school
Date of previous inspection	22–23 May 2014

Information about this school

- St James and Ebrington Church of England Primary School was formed as a federation on two sites over 30 years ago. The St James site is in Chipping Campden, and the second smaller site is in the village of Ebrington, about three miles away. Nearly all the children in early years attend the St James site.
- The school is a voluntary aided school. A section 48 inspection took place in September 2016.
- Ofsted carried out a short inspection in November 2018. The reporting letter provided the school with several next steps to consider before the next full inspection. These included: ensuring that assessment systems are established, ensuring that the most able pupils are challenged and developing subject leaders' skills.
- During the autumn term in 2018, the local authority, working in partnership with governors and the diocese, organised an interim executive headteacher to oversee

improvement in the school. This arrangement remains in place.

- The local authority supports the school through regular visits from a performance adviser. Monthly project meetings take into account the needs of the school to further enhance school improvement and consider whether additional resources are necessary.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning and breaktimes across both school sites and in all classes. They scrutinised a wide range of pupils' work books. These activities were carried out alongside leaders.
- Inspectors observed pupils reading with adults and talked to pupils about their learning and about their experiences at the school. The 44 responses from pupils to an online survey were considered, as well as the 12 responses to an online staff survey.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the rapid action plans, attendance and behaviour information, safeguarding documents, notes from recent local authority meetings and a recent review of the school.
- Several meetings took place with the interim executive headteacher and her leadership team, as well as subject leaders and members of staff. A meeting and two phone calls also took place with the local authority adviser who supports the school, and with the head of school improvement for Gloucestershire local authority. A telephone call took place with the director of education for the Diocese of Gloucester.
- Parents' views were gathered from both sites at the start of each day and from the 98 texts and views provided on Parent View, as well as from a letter given to the inspection team and two emails sent to Ofsted during the inspection.

Inspection team

Tonwen Empson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Paula Marsh

Ofsted Inspector

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