

St Gregory’s Church of England Primary School, Marnhull

New Street, Marnhull, Sturminster Newton, Dorset DT10 1PZ

Inspection dates

22–23 November 2016

| 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 are bringing about substantial improvement but their actions have not yet resulted in pupils’ outcomes that are consistently good.
- Governors have not halted the school’s decline quickly enough. They are not yet holding the school to account with sufficient rigour. Recent improvement is evident but is not yet sustained or making the difference it needs to across the school.
- Leaders’ checks on teaching and learning have not had sufficient impact. Consequently, too few pupils make the rates of progress that are expected from their different starting points in reading, mathematics and writing.
- Teachers’ expectations are not uniformly high. Not all pupils take pride in their work. Presentation and handwriting are not consistently good.
- Teachers do not consistently question pupils to extend their thinking. Planned learning is not always sufficiently challenging, resulting in the most able pupils’ progress stalling in some classes.
- Teachers’ assessments are not precise enough. As a result, pupils do not consistently get work that builds on what they know. For some pupils, spelling is a weakness; this is hindering their ability to produce high-quality, sustained writing.

The school has the following strengths

- Strong, dynamic leadership by the headteacher means the school is improving rapidly after an extended period of decline.
- Strong middle-leadership appointments have been made. There is good capacity to bring about further improvement.
- Parents are supportive of the school and appreciate the good communication they receive.
- Current teaching for Year 6 and Year 2 ensures that pupils make rapid progress towards the end of each key stage.
- The early years classroom is vibrant and all resourcing is now in place. Children benefit from caring and nurturing support. They build effective relationships and enjoy school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that pupils' achievement is consistently good by ensuring:
 - tasks planned for all pupils build on what pupils already know and provide sufficient challenge for all groups of pupils including middle-attaining and the most able
 - teachers have the skills to adapt their teaching within lessons so that all groups of pupils learn well
 - pupils have sufficient opportunity to apply writing skills across the curriculum and write at greater length and depth
 - work accelerates pupils' progress and accuracy in spelling
 - teachers' high expectations of pupils' presentation and spelling prevail across the school.
- Strengthen the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - governors hold leaders to account so that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make consistently good progress from their starting points
 - governors check that the leadership structure and use of external support across the school have a greater impact on raising pupils' standards
 - leaders' checks on teaching and learning in books are regular so weaknesses are picked up quickly and no learning time is lost.

An external review of governance is recommended.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher has worked tirelessly since in post. After a period of considerable decline in the school, her determined effort, week on week, is resulting in the school's ongoing recovery. However, her actions to date have not yet brought about sufficient improvement in the quality of teaching or pupils' outcomes that are consistently good. Therefore, leadership requires improvement overall.
- Leaders keep detailed information about pupils' progress. However, leaders do not check school performance information successfully against pupils' books so some discrepancies in pupils' understanding go undetected. Leaders are not yet consistently holding all teachers to account for the progress pupils are making from their starting points. As a result, progress for some pupils this year has stalled, particularly in lower key stage 2.
- Middle leaders' roles are developing well. This is helping to bolster and strengthen the leadership team. Teachers value the training they receive. As a result, teachers are making increasingly accurate assessments in writing. Consequently, the pace of improvement continues to gain in momentum this year.
- The enthusiastic leadership of the special educational needs coordinator is improving provision for this group of pupils. Her recent work is ensuring that underachievement is being tackled quickly. Multi-agency support is used effectively to assess and provide teachers with support to meet pupils' needs.
- Parents are very positive about the headteacher's leadership. They say communication has improved, and their children are happier and making swifter progress than previously. Parents value the headteacher's assiduous work to turn the school's weaknesses around.
- The school's curriculum promotes fundamental British values and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils talk very positively about collective worship and how the school's core values are entwined into their everyday work. Sports premium funding is used to good effect and results in higher engagement of pupils in a wide range of sports.
- Pupils experience a range of subjects. The curriculum is relevant and purposeful. For example, Remembrance Day poetry and prayers gave real significance to a recent church service. Science is also regular and the coverage of the programme of study is secure. However, opportunities for other subjects are inconsistent across the school, for example, modern foreign languages. At key stage 1, the level of challenge in history lessons is not high enough and activities recorded do not show consistently good learning. Leaders' actions need to have greater impact so that teaching and pupils' progress in a wider range of subjects are securely good.
- Leaders in the school track additional funding. Disadvantaged pupils' progress is analysed and a programme of support is in place to ensure both academic achievement and emotional well-being. As a result, current pupils in this group across the school are making good progress over time.

- External support by the local authority has not brought about improvements quickly enough or focused sufficiently on strengthening the impact of leaders at every level. The local authority has, however, provided helpful guidance for teachers through the county moderation of work process in early years, at the end of key stages 1 and 2.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is very supportive of the school; governors' roles are developing. Governors have embraced external training and this is beginning to bring about improvements in the way they hold the school to account. For example, they conduct regular visits and meet with subject leaders to review the impact of school improvement priorities. However, their questions to school leaders do not provide sufficient challenge. Consequently, governors have not fully held leaders to account for ensuring expectations are raised and outcomes are consistently good. This important aspect of their work needs to be further strengthened and requires improvement.
- Governors are increasingly well informed about how additional pupil premium funding is spent. However, they have not ensured that important information on the school's website is up to date, for example, pupil performance information and pupil premium funding statements. Therefore, information that is required by the Department for Education to be available on the school's website is not easily accessible for parents.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils feel safe in school and are taught about a range of potential risks. Pupils talk confidently about how to keep safe including e-safety. Designated safeguarding leaders have been trained to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism through the government's 'Prevent' programme. Further training is already planned for all staff in this respect. Staff are vigilant and the recording of any safeguarding concerns is meticulous. This ensures a clear and positive culture to safeguard pupils and minimise risk.
- All staff vetting checks are fit for purpose. However, some aspects of ongoing monitoring and recording of information need to be further sharpened. Statutory safeguarding requirements are met.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning is improving; there is some strong teaching across the school. However, teaching remains too variable. Inconsistencies have not yet been completely overcome so teaching is not yet good overall.
- During their first few years in school, some year groups in key stage 2 experienced considerable staff turbulence and weaker, inconsistent teaching. Subsequently some pupils underachieved. Current teaching is not yet ensuring that these pupils catch up quickly enough from their different starting points. Therefore, progress is not yet good.
- Conversely, workbooks in Years 2 and 6 demonstrate strong progress. This is because work is planned to specifically meet pupils' needs and teachers' high expectations are consistently borne out in lessons. Pupils maximise every opportunity to apply learning

in these classes. They expect their learning to be hard. Pupils act on teachers' feedback and, consequently, thrive.

- Teachers are getting to grips with the school's assessment system that supports regular moderation of work to identify what pupils know, understand and can do. However, some teachers' subject knowledge in the teaching of writing is variable. This results in their planning work that is not precisely matched to pupils' needs. Expectations are not uniformly high. Subsequently, too few pupils are challenged to meet the highest levels of achievement. Pupils' progress from their different starting points is not yet good, including middle-attaining pupils in writing.
- The impact of teaching on learning in mathematics is variable. In some classes, pupils receive tasks that are appropriately challenging on one day and too easy on the next. In some cases, pupils are moved through tasks too quickly and, therefore, insufficient opportunities are in place for pupils to consolidate their learning before they move on. Conversely, some teaching of mathematics provides plentiful opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding to problem-solve and reason. In such cases, pupils' progress is rapid this term and pupils flourish academically. This results in an uneven attainment profile in mathematics across the school.
- Teaching does not sufficiently challenge the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. Pupils often have to sit through easier work before they have the opportunity to tackle more difficult challenges. This makes it difficult for pupils to stay motivated in lessons. Passivity is a common feature where teaching is not resulting in consistently good progress.
- Most pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from effective support in lessons and additional intervention; their progress is now quickening.
- Teaching assistants provide a range of effective support, for example in small groups or individual interventions. However, there are occasions where pupils are over-reliant on this support. As a result, pupils lose focus when they are working independently. Consequently, pupils' progress stalls in parts of lessons and this limits pupils' understanding.
- The teaching of phonics at key stage 1 is good and pupils can apply these strategies effectively to their reading and writing. For some pupils in key stage 2, spelling remains a weakness and errors are not routinely tackled. This is hindering their ability to produce high-quality, sustained writing.
- At key stage 2, pupils demonstrate a keen understanding of what is being read. However, pupils in some year groups are less positive about the reading curriculum on offer because it does not extend their aptitude for reading or tasks are not appealing or thought provoking.
- Pupils are taught a wide range of subjects. Activities planned intend to motivate pupils but this is less successful in some classes. Low-level activities and limited opportunities to dig deeply into subject matter impede pupils' progress. Some outcomes in topic work across the school do not follow the school's marking policy and are not presented well. This results in standards of work that fall short of that seen in English and mathematics books. Writing across the curriculum is not yet sufficiently developed to

be good overall. Some subjects such as modern foreign languages are not taught regularly enough.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Not all pupils take pride in their work; presentation and handwriting are erratic in some classes. While the school's curriculum and school values promote personal development well, some pupils find it difficult to grapple with the inconsistent expectations set for them in lessons. Consequently, their learning attitudes and levels of confidence are variable.
- Pupils are polite and well-mannered around the school. They show kindness and respect for one another at lunchtimes. Pupils say practical games and activities provided at lunchtime are too limited. Nevertheless, lunchtimes are fun and sociable times and pupils get on well together.
- Care for those pupils who need additional support is thorough and well documented. Strong relationship with leaders and a range of extended services ensure that pupils' emotional well-being and wider personal development are well catered for.
- Pupils take on key responsibilities across the school, such as worship ambassadors. Additional enterprises, such as caring for and feeding the school ducks, provide pupils with a sense of social responsibility.
- Pupils know the many forms that bullying can take and they say that it is now rare. Pupils told the inspector that bullying has happened in the past but it does not happen now. They comment on the specific support they receive from adults in the school and how this helps them build effective relationships with each other. They know whom to go to if they are concerned and were adamant that current leaders sort out any minor differences immediately.
- Pupils benefit from a curriculum that teaches them about safety, cyber bullying, e-safety, swimming pool safety – particularly relevant for their school site. Consequently, pupils understand how to keep safe and say they know what to do if they have concerns. All parents and carers who contributed to the online questionnaire, Parent View, confirmed that their children feel safe and are well looked after at school.
- Pupils benefit from a calm start to the day at breakfast club. This is a sociable time for pupils who enjoy the activities on offer and benefit from a healthy breakfast. As a result, pupils are well prepared for their day and ready to learn.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils do not yet demonstrate consistently good learning behaviours across the school. They are not yet taking full responsibility as learners. When learning does not meet pupils' needs well, pupils' concentration in lessons is not consistently good. Adults do not pick up quiet off-task behaviour and this can result in outcomes in books not reflecting pupils' ability. Too little effort is accepted as the norm. Consequently, a positive learning culture in a few

classes is not well refined.

- Conversely, in other cases, pupils show exceptional learning behaviours. They are enthusiastic and conscientious learners as seen in their attitudes in lessons and their responses to teachers' feedback in their books. These pupils use and apply prior learning to extend their thinking. They are motivated and highly engaged in lessons.
- Pupils' attendance is good overall. Persistent absence is not an issue at St Gregory's and any concerns about attendance are followed up quickly.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The school's system for teacher assessment is developing but is not yet fully embedded. Some teacher assessments are not consistently accurate. As a result, there is a mismatch between school assessment data and the quality of work in some books. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils make uneven progress across the school in writing and mathematics. The fragility in the accuracy of teacher assessments and quality of work in books result in outcomes being too variable to be judged good overall.
- Teachers' expectations are too low for the most able pupils. There are too limited opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding so that they make good progress from their high starting points. Therefore, the progress of most-able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, is not good overall.
- At the end of Reception, the proportion of pupils who leave early years working at the expected standard has risen steeply in 2016. School outcomes are now above the national average. However, some pupils now in Year 1 have not sustained the standards at which they were assessed at the end of Reception and their progress has been more limited this year and is not consistently good, particularly in writing.
- As a result of better teaching, outcomes in phonics are now good. The proportion of pupils meeting the required standards in the phonics screening check has risen considerably in 2016 and is once again above the national average.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 1 in 2016 is below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Boys' attainment has been considerably lower than that of girls for the last three years in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2016, end of key stage 2 attainment in mathematics was in line with the national average. In reading, writing, and grammar, punctuation and spelling, attainment was below other schools nationally. Too few pupils with middle prior attainment met the expected standards in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2. Weak spelling also inhibited pupils' outcomes in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling assessment. Consequently, too few pupils made the progress that is expected across their time in key stage 2.
- As a result of strong teaching, most pupils in Year 2 are making rapid progress, particularly in writing. The proportion of pupils on track to exceed the expected standard in writing is high and progress overall is good. The progress of pupils in middle key stage 2 is too variable. Rates of progress pick up again in Year 6 because the teacher's expectations are consistently high. Consequently, those pupils who

underachieved last year when in Year 5 are catching up quickly towards nationally expected standards.

- Numbers of disadvantaged pupils are small and vary considerably from year to year. As such, it is not possible to compare the progress and attainment of these pupils with their peers nationally. However, current school performance information along with work in books show that pupils are making at least expected progress, but too few disadvantaged pupils are targeted or on track to exceed national expectations.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Leaders are ambitious and determined to ensure early years provision is consistently good. Leaders' actions have resulted in children's outcomes rising steeply last year to above the national average. However, girls do considerably better than boys. Increasing boys' attainment remains a key focus for the school.
- Children enter the setting with varied starting points. School performance information shows that children make at least typical progress. However, teaching in the early years does not meet children's needs well enough. Staff do not consistently ensure that all activities help children to make as much progress as they could. Consequently, some learning is fragile and is not fully sustained, particularly in writing, when pupils transfer to Year 1.
- Leaders' actions have, however, resulted in a transformation of the indoor classroom environment. It is vibrant and all resourcing is in place. Zoned areas reflect every aspect of learning. Therefore, children have open access and show independence when exploring each area.
- Staff work effectively with parents. Recent improvements to communication ensure they are kept well informed of their child's progress and achievements. One parent told the inspector they were 'very happy with my child's start to school'.
- Adults make detailed assessments of what children know, can do and understand. Activities are planned to meet the needs of children from their different starting points. However, not all adults fully maximise opportunities to notice, prompt and facilitate children's learning, particularly when children are exploring through their independent play. Consequently, opportunities are missed to support children in their learning. Assessment practices are not yet consistently strong across the setting. Leaders know what needs to be done to rectify this. There is good capacity for further improvement.
- The teaching of phonics in Reception is good. Teachers motivate children so that they show real curiosity in this aspect of learning and this ensures that they make strong progress in reading.
- Children benefit from caring and nurturing support. They build effective relationships and enjoy school. Safeguarding is effective.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 113805 |
| Local authority | Dorset |
| Inspection number | 10002950 |

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.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 141 |
| Appropriate authority | Local authority |
| Chair | Ros Eveleigh |
| Headteacher | Debbie Field |
| Telephone number | 01258 820206 |
| Website | www.stgregorymarnhull.dorset.sch.uk |
| Email address | office@stgregorymarnhull.dorset.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 25–26 June 2012 |

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. There are six classes. Reception and Years 1 and 2 are taught in single-year groups. Key stage 2 is taught in three mixed-age classes.
- There is a breakfast club and after school club; both are managed by the school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about pupil

premium funding and pupils' performance information on its website.

- In 2015, the school met the government's current floor standard which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning across the school. Some lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders.
- Telephone conversations took place with a representative of the local authority and Salisbury Diocese. A meeting also took place with the school's improvement partner.
- A meeting took place with three governors and the school's external improvement partner.
- The inspector scrutinised a number of school documents including the school action plan and the school's self-evaluation document. Records relating to behaviour and safety, attendance and safeguarding were also reviewed.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at lunchtime.
- The inspector conducted a walk around the school with pupils to look at curriculum displays, the promotion of British values and to find out how they feel about their learning and development.
- The inspector looked at work in books to establish the current quality of pupils' work and their progress over time and listened to pupils read.
- The inspector considered responses to the online survey, Parent View. The inspector also considered comments provided by parents' text messages and spoke to parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

Julie Carrington, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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