

St John's CofE Primary School

Blakebrook, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY11 6AP

Inspection dates

9–10 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
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 an inadequate school

- The headteacher has not taken effective action to address low pupil outcomes across the school since the last inspection.
- There is a lack of strong and incisive leadership. A significant number of staff do not feel that the school is well led.
- School leaders have an unrealistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, improvement planning does not focus on the most important priorities for the school.
- Information from the recently introduced assessment system is not used accurately by leaders, including those in the early years provision, to identify the impact of teaching on pupils' outcomes.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of what pupils should achieve and they set tasks that are not well matched to pupils' abilities.
- The curriculum has not been developed sufficiently well to ensure that pupils make good progress across all subjects.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is too low. This affects the progress and attainment of some pupils.
- There are a lack of opportunities for pupils to apply skills such as grammar and spelling in extended pieces of independent writing. As a result, outcomes in writing are too low across the school.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their mathematical skills and knowledge in problem-solving using reasoning.
- Teaching assistants are not used effectively across all classes to provide support and challenge for pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- School leaders place a high priority on pupils' well-being and safety. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure.
- The teaching of phonics in reading is effective. Pupils make good progress in reading.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The strong Christian ethos is evident across the work of the school.

Full report

In accordance with sections 44(1) and 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that there is strong and incisive leadership of the school at the highest levels and that the leaders focus on improving teaching and outcomes for pupils
 - ensuring that there is a cohesive school improvement plan that has a clear focus on the most important priorities for the school, sets challenging targets for improvements and is measurable and achievable
 - ensuring that monitoring and evaluation, involving leaders, governors and external expertise, are used effectively to check on the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' outcomes
 - embedding the assessment system within school so that pupils' progress and attainment can be accurately tracked to identify where outcomes are not sufficiently strong
 - developing a broad and balanced curriculum so that pupils have improved opportunities to make good progress across all subjects
 - improving attendance for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities by ensuring parents fulfil their responsibilities in making sure that their children attend regularly and on time.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that all teaching is consistently good or better and raise outcomes for all pupils, including children in the early years, by:
 - making sure that all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve and plan and teach tasks that are well matched to pupils' abilities
 - providing more opportunities to write independently in extended pieces of work and to apply their writing skills in other subjects
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills and knowledge in problem-solving using reasoning
 - ensuring that teaching assistants are used effectively in lessons to promote and extend pupils' learning, including language development.

It is strongly recommended that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- School leaders have an unrealistic and over-optimistic view of the school's effectiveness. Over time, school leaders have not recognised and acknowledged that pupils' outcomes have been too low. A lack of strong leadership from the headteacher has meant that insufficient action has been taken to address the areas of the school's work that require improvement. As a result, staff confidence in the school leadership is low. The majority of staff who responded to the online questionnaire were not confident that the school was well led.
- Monitoring and evaluation are not used effectively by leaders to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school. There is a lack of a cohesive approach to monitoring. The outcomes of the monitoring that does take place are not used and analysed well by senior leaders to draw up improvement plans.
- School improvement plans do not focus on the most important and pressing priorities for the school. They lack clear, well-thought-out actions and closely defined success criteria to evaluate the impact of actions taken.
- Leaders have revised the assessment systems that they use in school. While these are now providing information about the outcomes of different groups within school, leaders are not secure about the accuracy of the information. They do not ask sufficiently searching questions about what the assessment information tells them about the quality of teaching across the school and its impact on pupil outcomes.
- School leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is broad, balanced and planned sufficiently well to promote learning across all subjects. They have not monitored the quality of work in all subjects and, as a result, are not secure in their understanding of the progress that pupils are making.
- Pupils benefit from a good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. Pupils spoken to during the inspection were enthusiastic about taking part in activities such as choir, chess club, dance club and a drama group. One girl's comment that, 'I really like the fact that I do something different every day after school' validated the effort that leaders put into ensuring that pupils have opportunities to enhance their learning. During the inspection, the majority of Year 6 pupils were involved in a five-day residential course at the Arete Outdoor Education Centre in North Wales. This effectively supported their personal and social development and challenged them physically, through participation in activities including kayaking and rock scrambling.
- The local authority identified in September 2016 that outcomes for pupils were too low, especially in writing. They have provided support for the English subject leader and have helped her to identify how teaching and learning in this subject should be improved. She has a realistic view of what needs to be addressed and has already implemented changes. However, as yet, it is too early to see an impact on teaching across the school.
- The deputy headteacher leads the school's work with disadvantaged pupils effectively. Additional support is provided to pupils by teachers and other members of staff in specific areas of the curriculum, including reading and mathematics. Funding is also

used to support disadvantaged pupils' emotional and welfare needs and to enable them to participate in the full range of extra-curricular opportunities that the school offers. The deputy headteacher has recently worked with a representative from the local authority to carry out a review of the use and impact of the pupil premium grant in school. This has identified how assessment of all eligible pupils can be used more accurately to measure the impact that the additional support is having on these pupils' outcomes. It is too early to identify whether this will have a significant impact on diminishing differences in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

- The headteacher has established strong values that are at the heart of the school's work. These values, including creating 'a place where individuality is valued and diversity is celebrated' and 'a place which enables children to learn about the importance of faith', help to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in modern British society and recognise and show respect for other people's faiths and beliefs.
- The additional sports funding is used well to promote pupils' participation in a range of physical activities. A specialist sports teacher leads fitness sessions for pupils, including for those pupils who have previously been less active or disinclined to take part in sporting activities. Teachers' skills and confidence in leading this aspect of the curriculum have been developed by working alongside specialist sports coaches. Pupils appreciate the opportunities that they have to take part in a range of extra-curricular activities, including netball, 'fit kids' and girls' and boys' football led by Kidderminster Harriers.

Governance of the school

- Governors have strengthened their abilities to understand how the school compares with other schools, both locally and nationally. They have a realistic understanding that pupils are not achieving sufficiently high outcomes.
- Governors have carried out an audit of their skills and knowledge and recent appointments to the governing body have strengthened their effectiveness in providing support and challenge to school leaders.
- Governors are aware that pupils' outcomes since the last inspection have not been sufficiently high. They ask appropriate questions of school leaders about the actions that need to be taken. They use a range of information to understand how different groups of pupils are achieving. Governors recognise that all groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are not making consistently good progress.
- Governors have a clear understanding of how additional funding is used and its impact on pupils' outcomes. Governors have specific responsibilities and meet with identified members of staff on a regular basis to review the actions they are taking.
- While governors ask appropriate questions of school leaders in meetings, the information that they receive is not always sufficiently detailed. This limits their effectiveness in having a comprehensive and fully accurate involvement in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders have ensured that this aspect of the school's work has a high priority and is carried out effectively. There is a strong culture within school of ensuring that pupils are safe and well cared for. The designated safeguarding lead in school has a detailed understanding of how pupils should be protected. She has ensured that all staff are well trained and aware of their responsibilities, including in combating extremism and radicalisation and in identifying pupils who are vulnerable or at risk.
- Systems for reporting concerns are thorough and well understood by staff. Newly appointed members of staff receive safeguarding training as part of their initial induction into the school. Governors and leaders ensure that there are rigorous procedures in place to make sure that staff appointed to the school are suitably qualified and do not pose a risk to pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- There is too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching across the school. Some teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. They set work that is not accurately matched to the different abilities and needs of the pupils. They ask questions of pupils that are undemanding and do not require them to think deeply about their answers.
- The teaching of writing is particularly weak. There has not been a clear strategy from leaders as to how writing should be taught across the school. Skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling have been taught in isolation. Pupils have not been provided with sufficient opportunities to apply their knowledge in pieces of extended, independent work.
- Teachers do not make sure that teaching assistants are used effectively in some classes. They are underutilised at points during lessons and do not help pupils to develop a depth of understanding of new concepts. Too often, teaching assistants do not provide pupils with appropriate strategies to undertake their work independently and this slows the pace of learning.
- Teachers generally teach core skills in mathematics effectively. However, opportunities for pupils to use this knowledge in problem-solving using reasoning are underdeveloped. As a result, there is an overemphasis on computational activities, with pupils undertaking tasks that are easily within their capacity.
- Opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical and writing skills in other subjects are not sufficiently embedded across the school. Too often the activities that pupils carry out in subjects such as science and geography are mundane and do not promote a depth of understanding or sufficient interest in learning.
- The teaching of reading is good across the school. Teachers ensure that pupils develop a secure knowledge of phonics from the time they start in school. There is a whole-school approach to the teaching of reading. Pupils develop a love of reading and read fluently and with expression by the time they leave the school in Year 6. Pupils appreciate the fact that teachers and other adults read interesting and relevant stories

to them. Teachers also encourage pupils to ask questions when they are unsure of the meaning of words and this helps to widen their vocabulary and their comprehension of what they have read.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils show care and consideration to each other. Older pupils appreciate the responsibilities that they are given and take these roles seriously. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are identified as being good role models and are provided with training to act as 'Reading Buddies' for younger pupils. They listen to the other pupils read and help them develop their phonics knowledge. Other pupils are enabled to act as playground friends and provide good support to anyone else who may be feeling lonely or sad.
- The 'Worship Council' meets each month to discuss with school leaders ideas for assemblies. They consider how the school's values are being effectively conveyed to all members of the school community through the acts of daily worship.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and know that it is unacceptable and upsetting. The very large majority of pupils spoken to during the inspection, or who responded to the online pupil questionnaire, were confident that bullying is rare. When it does occur, adults deal with it swiftly and effectively. This view was confirmed by the large majority of parents who responded to the Parent View survey.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They know that the internet can pose dangers and understand the need to keep passwords secure and not give out personal information to people that they do not know.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and of disadvantaged pupils is below that of other pupils in school and below the national average. While attendance of some of these pupils has improved, there are still too many whose attendance is too low. School leaders recognise that this has a negative impact on these pupils' outcomes. Leaders have taken action to make sure that parents fulfil their responsibilities in ensuring that their children attend regularly and on time. However, these measures have not yet been fully successful.
- Pupils' behaviour around school and in classrooms is generally good. Pupils understand the sanctions that are in place if they misbehave and say that most people in school are well behaved. There are occasions when pupils are passively off-task when teaching is less engaging. However, this does not distract other pupils from their learning.
- Systems to monitor behaviour in school are rigorous and effective. Leaders ensure that

detailed records are kept of any inappropriate behaviour and there is evidence of the school's approach having a positive impact on the small minority of pupils who, at times, display particularly challenging behaviour. For example, at lunchtimes, there is a separate, well-supervised small outdoor area for pupils who find the larger spaces of the playgrounds difficult to cope with.

- The well-run before-school club helps pupils to have an enjoyable and positive start to the school day and is appreciated by parents and children.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because there is too much inconsistency in the progress that pupils make as they move through the school and between subjects. Pupils who are currently in school are making stronger progress in reading than in writing and mathematics. Evidence gathered during the inspection, including that from scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's own assessment information, indicates that outcomes vary between classes and between year groups.
- In the 2016 national key stage 2 assessment tests, pupils made broadly average progress in mathematics and reading. However, in writing, progress was well below the national average. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in writing was also well below the national average.
- In the 2016 national assessments, no pupils were assessed as working at greater depth in writing in key stage 1 or key stage 2. At key stage 2, the proportion of pupils working at the higher level was in line with the national average in mathematics.
- The most able pupils currently in school make broadly the same progress as other pupils. However, for many of them, particularly in writing, this progress from their starting points in school is not good enough.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to other pupils in school. However, a small minority make less progress due to their high levels of absence. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that the pupil premium funding is being used effectively to improve rates of progress for disadvantaged pupils, with additional trained support staff working alongside pupils to deliver programmes that are specific to their individual needs. Disadvantaged pupils' progress is not as strong as that of other pupils nationally.
- Outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are generally in line with those of other pupils in school. However, there is inconsistency in the progress that these pupils make, depending on the quality of the support that they receive. Some pupils make rapid and sustained progress, as their needs are accurately assessed, high-quality support is provided and their progress is accurately monitored and evaluated. However, this is not the case for all pupils, as the additional support they receive is not used effectively. The leader of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities recognises that the use and understanding of assessment data are not yet fully embedded. This limits her capacity to accurately evaluate the impact of interventions and support.
- Pupils' outcomes in reading are generally higher than in other subjects. In the 2016 national phonics screening check, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected

standard was below the national average. However, these pupils had made good progress from their starting points in school. In the Year 2 phonics screening check, the proportion achieving the expected standard was above the national average. Pupils develop good levels of fluency as they move through the school and are able to use this aspect of their learning to good effect in other subjects.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children enter school with skills and knowledge that are often below those that are typical for their age. In 2016, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development was above the national average. This was an improvement on the previous two years. As a result, the majority of children were well prepared to start in Year 1. However, evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that the proportion of children currently in Reception Year who are likely to achieve a good level of development will fall this year.
- Leaders do not yet use assessment information effectively to identify and track children's skills and knowledge. Opportunities for learning are missed as staff do not have secure information about children's abilities until they have been in school for over half a term. The evidence that staff collect on children's achievements lacks sufficient detail to enable teachers to make fully accurate assessments on progress.
- Teaching is inconsistent. While there is good teaching that is very well matched to the children's interests and abilities, this is not the case from all adults. Some staff miss opportunities to develop children's spoken language and this slows their progress in this area.
- Both the indoor and outdoor classrooms are attractive and well-resourced areas. All areas of learning are supported well. For example, during the inspection, children were observed using their developing number skills to count out objects and to write the correct numerals. Other children got delight in the outdoor area in making their own 'fireworks' and talking about the colours and sounds they would produce.
- There is a good focus on developing children's phonics knowledge. Children take part in daily reading sessions and quickly gain an understanding of the links between letters and the sounds they make. They then apply this knowledge to write words in simple sentences.
- Relationships in the early years provision are good. Teachers and other adults ensure that children feel safe and secure. Children talk happily to each other and develop good skills in sharing and taking turns. Adults set clear expectations for behaviour and children respond positively to them. Staff plan activities that are of interest to the children and this helps children develop good levels of sustained concentration and to make sensible choices about their learning.
- Arrangements for safeguarding and welfare are robust and meet statutory requirements. This reflects the high priority that this aspect of the school's work is given by all staff.
- Disadvantaged children make similar progress to their classmates. Additional funding is used to provide one-to-one support when appropriate. Outside agencies, including speech therapists, provide specialist interventions and advice as required.

- Links with parents are good. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's education through regular play and stay sessions. Parents spoken to during the inspection commented on how approachable the staff are and they appreciated the regular communication about all aspects of their children's school life.

School details

Unique reference number	135056
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10025336

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	404
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Tim Williams
Headteacher	Lawrence Gittins
Telephone number	01562 745 558
Website	www.stjohns.worcs.sch.uk/
Email address	office@stjohns.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 April 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about its charging and remissions policy, accessibility plan and the most recent key stage 2 results on its website.
- St John’s CofE Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below that in most schools.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school meets the government’s current floor standards, which are the minimum

expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils in Year 6.

- Since the previous inspection, there have been three different deputy headteachers. The current deputy headteacher has been in post for less than a year.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 19 lessons or parts of lesson. A number of these observations were undertaken with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They met with two groups of pupils, including members of the school council. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at the start of the school day, at breaktime and at lunchtime, as well as in lessons.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including assessments and records of pupils' progress, the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection and attendance, records of how teaching is managed and the school improvement plans.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and four middle leaders. The lead inspector met with seven members of the governing body, including the vice-chair. The lead inspector also considered a letter from the chair of governors. He had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 44 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and considered the 24 free text responses from parents. They also talked to parents at the start of the school day. They considered the 46 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 32 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- The very large majority of Year 6 pupils were on a residential trip during the inspection and, consequently, little teaching of this year group was observed.

Inspection team

Adam Hewett, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Chris Bandfield	Ofsted Inspector
Kevin Butlin	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Malam	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Orgill	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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