

Wareham St Mary Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Streche Road, Wareham, Dorset BH20 4PG

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2018

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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils across the school are variable. In some classes, the proportion of pupils working at expectations for their age has decreased over time.
- Leaders have not monitored the quality of teaching, learning and assessment closely enough. Pockets of weak teaching have not improved, which has resulted in inconsistent progress for pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils make poor progress. While the support for these pupils is strong in some classes, in others it is weak.
- Teachers do not consistently support pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities across the school. In some cases activities do not consider current targets for pupils to help them make progress.
- Teaching, learning and assessment do not consistently meet the needs of pupils. Where practice is weaker, activities are poorly designed and do not consider pupils' prior learning or understanding.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve in some classes are too low. Progress stalls and there is too much reliance on upper key stage 2 teachers to rapidly tackle underachievement.
- Reading opportunities for pupils vary from class to class. Pupils do not consistently read widely and often and this has contributed to a decline in the number of pupils working at expectations for their age.
- Although attendance has improved throughout this academic year, persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils remains high.

The school has the following strengths

- Early years is a strength. Adults plan well-designed activities which successfully engage children, igniting their interest. Children are confident and thrive in a warm, nurturing environment.
- Pupils have access to a rich and varied curriculum. Pupils develop their knowledge across a range of subjects with activities that engage them effectively. Sequences of lessons are well planned and build on pupils' knowledge.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact and effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, including governance, by making sure that:
 - through robust and regular monitoring, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently strong and pupils' progress improves
 - leaders monitor pupils' progress and attainment regularly and, where underperformance is present, they take steps to improve performance
 - strong practice is shared across the school so that all staff are aware of, and meet, the expectations that leaders aspire to
 - middle leaders monitor their areas of responsibility and demonstrate how their actions have brought about improvements
 - monitoring of current pupils' progress is refined and, where needed, effective interventions are implemented, particularly for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils
 - teachers have the subject knowledge required to understand the school's curriculum fully and to know how to meet the needs of pupils effectively, particularly in mathematics
 - governors effectively hold leaders to account, based on detailed analysis of all aspects of school performance, including attendance, behaviour and pupils' progress and attainment.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers carefully consider assessment information and plan activities to meet the needs of all pupils so that more pupils are working at expectations for their age
 - teachers raise expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly for the most able, so that more pupils are working at the higher standard
 - teachers effectively support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils through carefully designed activities so that they make strong progress from their starting points
 - teaching in mathematics promotes a rounded approach to mathematical understanding, particularly reasoning and problem-solving
 - teaching takes account of prior attainment and builds on prior learning, in particular at the beginning of key stages 1 and lower key stage 2, so that pupils make strong progress and do not repeat learning unnecessarily
 - pupils, in particular lower-attaining pupils, have access to high-quality reading opportunities closely matched to meet their needs
 - expectations of pupils' writing are raised and teaching supports pupils to work at expectations for their age and at the higher standard.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not acted quickly enough to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Although leaders have identified where practice is weaker, there have been few or no improvements. Leaders acknowledge that in order for pupils' outcomes to improve, it is essential to ensure that pupils have access to high-quality teaching throughout the school. Leaders have not shared the strong practice widely across the school.
- Across all levels of leadership, leaders have correctly identified where weaknesses are present. However, due to a lack of precise monitoring in their areas of responsibility, leaders have been unable to prevent low performance recurring. They have made clear their intention to bring about change, but actions are in their infancy. Therefore, leaders' impact is not yet evident.
- Middle leaders in their new roles are increasingly frustrated at the variance in standards across the school. Unfortunately, not all members of staff respond positively to well-informed judgments on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The coordinator responsible for supporting pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities (SENCo) has provided teachers with a wealth of support and strategies for meeting the needs of these pupils. However, there is inconsistency in how well teachers are fulfilling their roles and responsibilities to support these pupils. Strong practice occurs in early years and in upper key stage 2, where support for pupils is of high quality. Leaders acknowledge that in order to improve the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, expectations must rise and accountability be in place for teachers who are not implementing the school's agreed strategies.
- The leader responsible for supporting disadvantaged pupils is clearly passionate and aware of where weaknesses in support for these pupils lie. She acknowledges that she has, to date, had limited scope to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make better progress across the school. Through inconsistent practice, pupils make poor progress, particularly across key stage 2. The proportion of pupils working at expectations for their age decreases as they move up through the school.
- Governors and trustees do not share an equally in-depth understanding of the school's performance. While trustees know that the school's performance is of concern in places, they have not acted swiftly enough to bring about change. Furthermore, they do not ask leaders for in-depth analysis of, for example, safeguarding information, behavioural incidents, attendance figures or progress for current pupils. This has limited their ability to hold leaders to account.
- Some of the systems for recording behavioural incidents are inaccurate. While leaders have an overview of behaviour, they have not monitored individual class records, which show that the frequency of such incidents. Leaders have yet to analyse these incidents, and therefore incidents of poor behaviour persist in these classes.
- Leaders have developed a rich and varied curriculum for pupils. They place great pride in ensuring that pupils develop a broad range of skills, knowledge and understanding

across a range of wider curriculum subjects. Leaders are passionate about contextualising learning for pupils.

Governance of the school

- Governors and trustees have a varying understanding of how well the school is performing. While it is clear that the school's performance has fallen beneath expectations, some do not fully understand why. A major reason for such inconsistent understanding is the lack of detail that stakeholders expect to see. This has restricted their ability to hold leaders to account. Furthermore, leaders do not share information about current pupils' inconsistent progress wholly with all governors and trustees, further diluting their effectiveness to bring about improvements.
- Governors are not asking for detailed analysis of the school's performance. Information about aspects such as behaviour, attendance, progress and attainment are too narrow in focus and this has stifled their ability to effectively monitor trends over time and subsequently improve performance. While trustees are more knowledgeable about the school's performance and where weaknesses occur, their actions have stalled due to a range of mitigating factors, particularly around staffing. They acknowledge that improvements must be swift and effective, with heightened accountability in place.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The appointment process of staff is thorough. Leaders ensure that they only employ staff that are suitable to work with children. However, leaders and governors have not effectively monitored the school's administrative aspects of safeguarding. One result was that leaders had to correct aspects of the single central register during the inspection. Furthermore, staff logging of safeguarding concerns has been inconsistent. Leaders acknowledge the need for further staff training as well as evaluating the school's current system for recording concerns.
- Pupils, staff and the majority of parents agree that pupils are safe in school. Staff are trained to recognise risk or concerns surrounding pupils. Furthermore, they know who they should communicate concerns with, particularly when these are more urgent. Leaders maintain close contact with external agencies and can demonstrate how they have challenged external agencies where they felt that involvement was needed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching does not consistently meet the needs of pupils. Where practice is strongest, teachers plan activities that match the needs of pupils. However, where practice is weakest, activities are poorly planned and do not consider pupils' prior understanding. As a result, some pupils find the work too hard, while others find it too easy.

- Teaching does not always consider pupils' prior knowledge or progress. Due to inconsistencies in this area, some pupils develop more gaps in their learning the higher through school they go. Leaders acknowledge that more work is needed to ensure that teachers know the expectations from the previous year. The impact of this can be seen in upper key stage 2, where teachers ensure that pupils make rapid progress while also 'filling in' gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- The teaching of reading is not effective for all pupils. In some cases, teachers choose texts which contain vocabulary that pupils cannot decode or understand. In these cases, pupils are guessing answers based on the few words that they can read and understand, resulting in errors. Consequently, reading progress varies from class to class and pupils struggle to understand certain texts.
- Teachers do not consistently provide good-quality opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics. In some classes, teachers expect pupils to complete pages of written calculations before moving on to more challenging learning. Elsewhere, other teachers are more confident in posing questions that are challenging and deepen pupils' understanding of what they are learning. Leaders recognise the need for greater consistency if more pupils are to work at expectations for their age and at the higher standard.
- Lessons, and sequences of lessons, do not consistently take into account the progress that pupils are making. An example was where pupils had not yet grasped how to multiply a two-digit number by a one-digit number. Nevertheless, the whole class moved onto the next unit of finding the perimeter of quadrilaterals. This is indicative of weak practice. Where teachers do not deal effectively with these misconceptions, pupils are ill-prepared or lack the knowledge to move on successfully to new learning.
- Teachers' expectations in writing are too low in some classes. While pupils in some classes develop a well-balanced writing technique which captures age-appropriate skills and grammatical aspects, this strong practice is not yet shared across the school. There are occasions where teachers expect pupils to use capital letters and full stops correctly, even though this should have been taught and mastered years before. Furthermore, teachers' assessments of pupils' writing are not wholly accurate, further stalling progress. Teachers' varied expectations of pupils' writing closely correlate with pupils' varying progress across the school.
- Pupils have access to a well-rounded curriculum. In religious education, pupils learn about different faiths and can apply what they have learned successfully. Furthermore, in curriculum areas such as science, art, geography, history and design technology, teaching builds on prior learning and successfully engages pupils as they further develop their knowledge across a well-planned series of lessons. Pupils appreciate these lessons and speak knowledgeably about what they have learned. In some classes, teachers effectively use their subject knowledge to probe understanding and ask increasingly challenging questions of pupils, and where this takes place, learning is enriched further.
- Pupils present their work in books neatly and with pride. It is clear that leaders' expectations on their 'non-negotiables' on presentation and handwriting are filtering through into classrooms.

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 school is effective in promoting healthy lifestyles and ensuring that pupils develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding through a rich, diverse curriculum. However, there are some incidents recorded in the behaviour records which relate to pupils' well-being. Unfortunately, leaders have missed these through lack of monitoring. Pupils are safe in school but the design of some systems means that there are occasions when leaders have not received information about events affecting pupils as soon as they have taken place.
- Pupils across key stage 2 have a strong understanding of e-safety and the role it plays in ensuring that they stay safe. They are knowledgeable about what to do to if risks emerge. But leaders have not ensured that this same level of understanding is shared by pupils in key stage 1. Some pupils are vague about e-safety, even though they have participated in internet awareness days in the school. As a result, the importance of e-safety and the role it plays in keeping pupils safe online are not shared or understood by all.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. While pupils are confident that adults effectively deal with bullying if it takes place, behaviour records show that in some cases, behaviour falls short of the school's expectations and adults do not always share incidents with leaders. This reduces the overview that leaders and governors have about behaviour across the school as well as limiting their ability to deal with behaviour issues when they arise. Leaders acknowledge that systems for recording behaviour incidents require refinement so that they are well placed to monitor behaviour, and ultimately reduce the number of incidents.
- Attendance across the school has improved over the course of this academic year to be closer in line with national averages. Leaders have tackled this area of school performance and have had most impact in reducing persistent absence. However, persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils is still above national averages. As a result, approximately 20% of disadvantaged pupils are persistently absent.
- Although behavioural incidents do occur, the majority of pupils conduct themselves well throughout the school day. They are confident in holding meaningful conversations with their peers and adults. Lesson time is calm and conducive to learning, and lunchtimes and playtimes are calm and orderly.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016 and 2017, the progress made by pupils across key stage 2 was well below national figures. This is indicative of inconsistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and fluctuating progress as pupils moved from class to class.

Assessment information for current pupils' show that this trend looks set to continue. While pupils in upper key stage 2 make stronger progress, it is not enough to mask previous underachievement.

- Current pupils' progress varies widely from class to class, depending on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Where activities meet the needs of pupils, pupils develop knowledge and understanding more successfully and they find activities challenging. Where teachers plan poorly designed tasks, activities are either inaccessible without adult support or too easy. Pupils' progress fluctuates from class to class, which has resulted in poor progress across key stage 2 in the last three years.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress varies widely. The use of the pupil premium lacks the effective implementation it needs to ensure that it is effective in supporting disadvantaged pupils across the school. While support is strong in upper key stage 2 and early years, this is too infrequent when considering where its effectiveness falls short. As a result of this wide variance, disadvantaged pupils' progress is sporadic, reflecting the ineffective support on offer to them.
- The rate of progress made by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is dependent on which class they are in. In some classes, adults plan activities that consider pupils' specific needs on their support plans. However, this is not the case throughout the school. In some classes, the little consideration given to these plans results in poorly planned activities which fail to meet the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. In short, these pupils make inconsistent progress across the school.
- Pupils do not develop a rounded knowledge of the mathematics curriculum. While pupils have opportunities to practise and develop their fluency through written calculations, they do not develop their reasoning and problem-solving knowledge to the same degree. As a result, the proportion of pupils working at expectations for their age and at the higher standard is low in some classes. Many pupils arrive in Years 5 and 6 with significant gaps in their learning.
- Pupils' writing develops at a varying pace across the school. There are some lower-attaining pupils who do not receive the support they need to make progress. This is because teaching does not meet their needs. There are also some higher-attaining pupils who have few opportunities to further develop their writing skills, limiting their progress. While presentation is a strength across the school, expectations of developing pupils' writing techniques vary too widely, stalling progress.
- Reading opportunities for pupils are inconsistent both in quantity and quality. There are some pupils who read infrequently at both home and school, which hinders the progress they make in school. Additionally, some reading activities in school lack the precision required to help pupils develop their decoding skills and language comprehension. This impedes their ability to fully appreciate a text they have read and understand it. Consequently, where practice is weaker, pupils' progress stalls.
- Pupils' progress in upper key stage 2 is a strength of the school. Pupils from all groups, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and pupils from across a range of abilities, make strong progress. Where specific targets are in place to support pupils, teachers plan finely-tuned activities to ensure that pupils have quality opportunities to meet these targets. Furthermore, heightened expectations and

increasing teacher subject knowledge in these classes result in more rapid, sustained progress.

Early years provision

Good

- The Reception class is a strength of the school. Children get off to a speedy start. From the outset, adults use accurate assessments which successfully form a part of children's baseline assessment. The early years leader plans all activities throughout the academic year with these in mind, aiming to develop each child's unique portfolio according to their emerging needs. Furthermore, adults work effectively with the SENCo to ensure that they quickly identify children who may require specialist support. Consequently, children make strong progress across the Reception Year, with a greater proportion working at expectations for their age by the end of the academic year.
- Children enjoy the provision and forge strong friendships. Adults have high expectations and only need to subtly nudge children in the right direction if choosing activities proves difficult. When children choose an activity, they stick with it without losing interest. Adults design activities with children at the centre of all decision-making, thus stimulating their interest and enjoyment and promoting strong progress.
- Since the early years leader took up her role at the school three years ago, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development (GLD) has increased each year. In 2015, the proportion of children achieving GLD was below the national average. In 2016 and 2017, the proportion was broadly in line with national averages. Recent assessments for the current cohort show that the proportion of children achieving GLD is likely to grow above national averages in 2018.
- Children seamlessly manipulate the environment around them. It is accessible, rich in stimulation and designed to reduce children's dependence on adults. During child-initiated play, children focus on the activity at hand. They encourage one another, and in some cases, even teach one another. In one example, a child was writing a card for her parents and needed help with spelling the words 'mum' and 'dad'. Without delay, a child rose to their feet with a whiteboard pen in hand to model the spelling, while also 'sounding out' the letters to promote familiarisation with each phoneme contained within the words.
- Adults are aware of, and actively support, disadvantaged children to help them make strong progress. They direct resources and teaching time to support these pupils effectively. Through this work, disadvantaged pupils read regularly at school. Through the use of the early years pupil premium, adults have made available much needed speech and language support. This has been effective in improving outcomes in communication and language across the Reception Year. As a result, disadvantaged children make strong progress from their starting points and adults' support is bespoke to their individual needs.
- The early years leader has a clear vision for the Reception class. It is extremely well run, and organised and expectations are high. She effectively shares these expectations across the staff team. Adults enjoy their work, are proud of what children have achieved and take great pride in every child. They have both played their role in

creating a warm, nurturing early years setting where children thrive both emotionally and academically.

- The early years leader, ably supported by her staff, has created a safe and supportive environment. Staff have ensured that the statutory checks have been completed, ranging from paediatric first aid training through to staff-to-children ratios. Alongside these checks, adults are vigilant concerning safeguarding. Children are happy and feel safe in the Reception class.
- Learning journeys usually capture children's learning across the Reception Year accurately. These are well-presented and bursting with pride. It is clear that they are held in high regard among both staff and parents. In some cases, the amount of evidence captured in these books varies from child to child. While some children are on their second book, others are still on their first. Consequently, the quality of evidence varies.

School details

Unique reference number	142167
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10047236

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	190
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Brendan Mullany
Headteacher	Nigel Beckett
Telephone number	01929 552517
Website	www.warehamstmary.dorset.sch.uk
Email address	office@warehamstmary.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- There have been several changes to the leadership of the school. The headteacher returned to the school on a full-time basis in April 2018, having previously worked as the chief executive officer in Saturn Education Trust. Only recently, the school has established a strand of middle leaders.
- The school was classified as a 'coasting school' in 2017. This is due to three consecutive years of coasting elements in 2015, 2016 and 2017.
- The school is part of the Saturn Education Trust, a local multi-academy trust comprising three schools across the Purbeck region of Dorset.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector met with representatives from the governing body and the multi-academy trust. Inspectors also met with the headteacher, and members of the school's leadership team, including subject leaders, the pupil premium leader, the early years leader and the SENCo.
- Inspectors observed learning in each class. Inspectors also scrutinised a range of pupils' workbooks from Years 1 to 6.
- Inspectors met with pupils from key stages 1 and 2 to discuss their attitudes to learning, their thoughts on behaviour across the school, how often they read and, finally, how the school promotes their personal development and well-being.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 69 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. A member of the inspection team also met and spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day.
- An inspector reviewed safeguarding documentation and the school's single central register. Furthermore, inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding policies, procedures and culture, to ascertain whether safeguarding was effective.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including external reviews of school performance, the school's evaluations of its own performance and the current school development plan. Inspectors also considered the action plans for specific areas of school performance, including literacy, mathematics, use of the pupil premium and the support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

Inspection team

Nathan Kemp, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jeremy Law

Her Majesty's 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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