

St Gregory’s Church of England Primary School, Marnhull

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

Inspection dates

27–28 February 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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently strong. Teachers do not routinely consider what pupils know, can do and understand when providing activities.
- Subject leaders are new to role and as yet not wholly clear about their roles and responsibilities. Leaders’ monitoring of standards in their subjects is not robust enough.
- Until recently, governors have not held leaders to account enough. Governors are too reliant on school leaders to provide them with information about the school’s performance.
- Younger pupils are not clear about how to stay safe when using the internet.
- Pupils’ progress across the school is inconsistent, depending on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders’ priorities for improvement lack focus. Their attention is widely distributed, but the quality of their work is diluted.
- The newly appointed special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has worked effectively to put in place a provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It is too soon to see the impact of this work.
- Pupils do not consistently apply spelling, punctuation and grammar features in their writing.
- Teachers do not consistently offer a challenge to reach the higher standard, particularly for higher-attaining pupils.
- Lower-attaining pupils do not regularly read suitable books.
- Pupils do not consistently develop their fluency, reasoning and problem-solving knowledge.

The school has the following strengths

- Children get off to a strong start in the Reception class. Staff provide high-quality activities that closely match children’s needs.
- Pupils behave well and attend well. They have positive attitudes towards school and value their experiences.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management to ensure that:
 - subject leaders are provided with support and training so that they can effectively monitor and raise standards in their subject, particularly writing and mathematics
 - the quality of teaching across the school is consistently strong so that pupils make strong progress from their starting points
 - teachers provide suitably challenging activities that meet the various needs of all pupils, particularly the higher-attaining
 - leaders' priorities for improvement are precise, monitored closely and robustly reviewed for impact
 - governors hold leaders to increased account, focusing clearly on current pupils' progress and accurately reviewing leaders' actions for improvement
 - the provision for pupils with SEND continues to embed, so that pupils make strong progress from their starting points.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment, so that:
 - teachers provide pupils with regular, high-quality opportunities to develop their fluency, reasoning and problem-solving knowledge in mathematics, so that pupils make strong progress from their starting points
 - teachers ensure that pupils have consistent opportunities to practise and develop their writing and apply grammar, punctuation and spelling strategies, so that pupils' progress is strong
 - teachers provide suitable challenge for pupils, particularly higher-attaining pupils, so that more are working at the higher standard across all subjects
 - teachers across the school consistently consider what pupils know, can do and understand when providing activities for pupils to complete, including pupils with SEND
 - pupils access reading books that closely meet their reading abilities, particularly lower-attaining pupils.
- Improve pupils' personal development and welfare so that pupils across the school have a strong understanding of how to keep safe when using the internet.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the school has undergone a series of changes to teaching staff and leadership positions. This has delayed the headteacher's vision for improving the school. Since September 2018, the pace of improvement has been rapid. However, leaders have not fully implemented their vision, as the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently strong.
- Leaders have set priorities for school improvement. While these are wide-ranging and cover all aspects of the school's performance, they are often too vague. It is not always clear how successful leaders' actions have been, as milestones are not precise enough. Due to the high number of priorities, leaders have not been able to give sufficient attention to aspects that are of most importance.
- The recently appointed SENCo has worked diligently to undertake a full review of the provision for pupils with SEND. In addition, she is revising how staff measure pupils' progress. She has ensured that all pupils receive appropriate support through interventions. She acknowledges that teachers occasionally set pupils targets that lack precision and is working with staff to provide training and professional development to strengthen this aspect of their work. As yet, it is too soon to see how well her actions have contributed to pupils' progress.
- Newly appointed subject leaders are not yet fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. They have not had the required training and support to enable them to monitor the standards in their subjects or to ensure a consistent approach to how their subjects are taught. They are both strong teachers in their own subjects and have a good vision for their subject. However, leaders have not implemented their vision across the school.
- Leadership of mathematics is in its infancy. While there is a consistent approach to how staff teach mathematics across the school, the quality of this is variable. Leaders' monitoring of pupils' progress and the implementation of the curriculum is not robust enough. As a result, the quality of mathematics teaching does not ensure that pupils across the school develop their fluency, reasoning and problem solving.
- The newly appointed literacy leader has not yet had enough time to implement her vision for literacy across the school. Over time, teachers have adopted a range of different approaches. This has led to a lack of consistency across the school as teachers are not wholly clear about the school's approach. Leaders acknowledge that they need to make clear their expectations and to closely monitor pupils' progress. Consequently, the quality of writing varies across the school.
- The use of the pupil premium funding is effective. Leaders have closely considered each pupil who is entitled to support and have put in place support and interventions that meet individual needs. Current pupils make strong progress; leaders provide bespoke support which considers pupils' individual needs.
- Leaders' use of the sports premium is effective. Pupils describe the school as a 'sporty school' and speak favourably about the opportunities they have to participate in sporting activities. The newly developed 'daily mile' track has been welcomed by pupils.

They enjoy the chance to participate in a daily run with their peers at the beginning of the school day. They state that it helps them focus for the day ahead.

- Leaders have ensured that pupils access a wide-ranging and interesting curriculum. Pupils develop their knowledge across a range of subjects and speak positively about these lessons. Leaders changed the school's curriculum offer to promote pupils' cross-curricular experiences, such as writing for a range of purposes, and to raise pupils' attitudes to their learning.
- The headteacher has strengthened the quality of leadership across the school. She has appointed a new deputy headteacher, a SENCo and subject leaders who all share her vision for the school. Leaders have an accurate evaluation and have identified appropriate aspects of the school's performance. They have clear plans in place for school improvement and are enthusiastic about securing the school's status as a good school.

Governance of the school

- Until recently, the governing body has not been challenging enough. Governors acknowledge that they were not asking enough probing questions about the school's performance and relied too heavily on end-of-key-stage assessments to judge the school's effectiveness. This limited their understanding of how well current pupils progress across the school.
- Governors rely too heavily on school leaders to provide them with information about how well pupils progress across the school. While governors have an increased awareness of the schools' performance, they remain too focused on pupils' attainment rather than progress from pupils' starting points. Governors are not yet fully confident when considering information about pupils' progress and how well leaders' actions are having an impact.
- The new chair of governors has had a positive influence on the governing body. There is an increased focus on adding more challenge to school leaders, and governors are increasing their effectiveness in this aspect of their work. The governors have clear roles and responsibilities, designed to sharpen their focus on specific aspects of the school's performance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that recruitment procedures are robust. Leaders only appoint staff who are suitable to work with children. Leaders record employment checks on the school's single central register. Once appointed, staff access a high-quality induction to ensure that they are well prepared to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. Leaders make sure that staff receive ongoing training, so that they remain vigilant to recognising concerns and there are no doubts about fulfilling statutory duties.
- Staff are well placed to recognise concerns about pupils' welfare. Although concerns are rare and few, leaders have promoted a culture where staff are vigilant. Staff pass on concerns to the relevant leader for safeguarding. Leaders take proportionate action,

based on the severity of these concerns. Leaders work well with external agencies, particularly professional support. Parents and carers have opportunities to share concerns they may have and are signposted to appropriate guidance or support.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Some teachers do not routinely consider what pupils know, can do and understand when providing activities for pupils to complete. Furthermore, in lessons and over time, teachers are not consistently noticing how well pupils are making progress. This inhibits how well teachers amend activities to match pupils' emerging needs.
- The teaching of writing does not consistently ensure that pupils across the school have high-quality opportunities to practise and apply grammar, punctuation and spelling strategies in their writing. While teachers try to promote positive attitudes to writing across a range of subjects, pupils struggle to demonstrate the skills expected of writers at their age. For example, in key stage 1, some pupils struggle to understand the function of a full stop.
- The teaching of mathematics varies across the school. On occasion, teachers do not provide high-quality opportunities for pupils to develop their fluency, reasoning and problem-solving knowledge. Where teaching is strongest, pupils access a balance of activities that provide them with rich opportunities to apply what they know across a range of activities. Where weakest, there is an over-reliance on developing pupils' fluency without opportunities to apply this knowledge.
- Some teachers do not routinely provide suitable challenge for pupils, particularly higher-attaining pupils. While teachers have a strong understanding about what pupils must do to work at expectations for their age, they are not so clear about how to extend pupils' knowledge further so that more pupils work at the higher standard. As a result, for some higher-attaining pupils, work is occasionally too easy.
- Until recently, teachers relied too heavily on the SENCo to provide support for pupils with SEND. Recently, teachers have taken responsibility for pupils' progress and have been providing interventions to help pupils make improved progress. However, the quality of targets that teachers provide varies. Some targets are not precise enough to meet the emerging needs of pupils.
- Teachers deploy support staff effectively. Support staff work closely with pupils and use questioning successfully to probe pupils' understanding. In addition, support staff help pupils well in lessons when they find an activity difficult.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively. Lessons are engaging, and pupils are keen to learn. Pupils enjoy lessons and eagerly participate in discussions about their learning. In lessons, pupils are attentive, and disruption is rare. Pupils' books demonstrate pride in their work.
- Teachers promote pupils' use of ambitious vocabulary. Teachers ensure that pupils access the full breadth of the curriculum, which helps pupils learn well across a range of foundation subjects. As pupils develop knowledge in these subjects, they become more familiar with vocabulary, which they then apply across a range of contexts.

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 proud of their school and feel that they have contributed towards the school's effectiveness. Through the school council, 'playground buddies' and 'reading buddies', pupils make strong contributions to the school as well as developing strong relationships with peers of all ages. Through the 'reading buddies' initiative, older pupils pair up with younger pupils and listen to them read and celebrate their progress. Older pupils are openly proud about their work with younger pupils and act as positive role models.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They are eager to highlight all that it has achieved and are positive about the work it has done to support the local community and charities, including the adoption of a guide dog called Spirit. Pupils celebrate the school's Christian distinctiveness, and through the work of the 'worship ambassadors', they contribute to church services and occasions when the whole school gathers as a community bound together by its faith.
- Pupils' understanding of how to keep safe when using the internet is not consistent across the school. While older pupils have a very strong knowledge about what steps they should take should they feel unsafe, younger pupils are less knowledgeable. While they are aware of current internet risks, they are not clear about what they should do if they encounter these risks online.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils conduct themselves well across the school, holding doors open for adults and demonstrating high levels of respect. Pupils are adamant that behaviour is a strength of the school and incidents of poor behaviour are rare. At playtimes, pupils engage well with one another, and 'playground buddies' facilitate playground activities as well as ensuring that the school's values are represented during these times.
- Pupils attend well. Over time, pupils' attendance has been better than or in line with national averages. In addition, few pupils regularly miss school. Leaders act in a timely, effective manner when pupils' attendance falls short of their expectations and engage parents in this process. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to attend.
- Behaviour is a strength of the school. Incidents of poor behaviour are rare. Should incidents occur, leaders take effective action. A few pupils are on a specific behaviour plan. Leaders follow the steps within these plans to help pupils manage their behaviour. As a result, incidents reduce over time.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over time, pupils' progress from key stage 1 to key stage 2 has been poor, particularly in writing and mathematics. While the proportions of pupils working at expectations for

their age have been broadly in line with national averages by the end of key stage 2, these figures have not reflected pupils' strong prior attainment.

- The proportion of pupils working at the higher standard across key stage 2 is variable. In recent years, the proportion of pupils working at the higher standard has been below national averages. This is because pupils who can access more difficult work do not routinely access learning that is suitably challenging.
- Pupils' application of spelling, grammar and punctuation in writing is not consistently strong across the school. Pupils enjoy the process of writing and benefit from opportunities to write across a range of genres and different subjects. However, occasionally, pupils rely too heavily on teachers when practising their writing. Consequently, pupils' precision when independently applying spelling, grammar and punctuation is variable across the school.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their fluency, reasoning and problem-solving knowledge in mathematics are not yet offered consistently. In some cases, staff ask pupils to demonstrate their fluency for too long without opportunities to deepen their mathematical knowledge across a range of contexts. Across the school, reasoning and problem solving are the weaker aspects of pupils' mathematical curriculum. As a result, pupils' progress across the school is inconsistent.
- Until recently, pupils with SEND have made poor progress from their starting points. Over time, pupils have not had access to interventions and support to help them make strong progress. Interventions are now in place, but on occasion staff provide interventions that do not precisely match pupils' emerging needs. As a result, current pupils' progress varies. In addition, it is not yet possible for leaders to demonstrate how this work has benefited pupils' progress in the long-term from their starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making improved progress. Over time, disadvantaged pupils' progress has been weak, but current pupils access support and interventions that are closely matched to their emerging needs. Pupils benefit from bespoke support and make strong progress from their starting points.
- Pupils' reading opportunities vary. Most pupils have frequent opportunities to practise reading at school, but some books are not well matched to pupils' reading abilities, particularly for lower-attaining pupils. At home, some pupils read widely and often to a family member, but this is not consistent across all pupils. Lower-attaining pupils read a lot less at home than their peers. As a result, the gap between lower-attaining pupils and their peers widens.
- Pupils access a wide-ranging and varied curriculum. They develop their knowledge across a range of subjects and, where possible, have opportunities to develop their writing to a context. Pupils speak knowledgeably and enthusiastically about these lessons and value these learning opportunities. Pupils use an increasingly ambitious range of vocabulary, which they have developed across the foundation subjects.
- Middle-attaining pupils make strong progress. Pupils are making stronger progress because activities are well designed to meet their emerging needs. Over time, the proportion of pupils across the school working at expectations for their age has been a strength.

- Over time, pupils' attainment by the end of key stage 1 has been strong. Recent outcomes in key stage 1 are above national averages and pupils have made good progress from their prior attainment. However, current pupils' progress is not indicative of this historical trend.
- In some classes and subjects, pupils make strong progress. Pupils access learning that is well matched to their needs, and their books capture how well they are achieving throughout the academic year. In these instances, pupils are demonstrating what they are capable of and activities are suitably challenging.

Early years provision

Good

- The new early years leader, appointed in September 2018, has made clear her vision for the Reception class. She wants to promote children's independence when accessing activities by ensuring that these activities are thought-provoking, engaging and well matched to children's needs. She has achieved this goal in a short time, and children achieve well.
- Children in the Reception class make strong progress from their starting points. Staff use information about what children know, can do and understand at the beginning of the Reception Year and provide activities to promote progress. As a result, children access activities that are well matched to their emerging needs.
- Staff provide high-quality, engaging activities for children. Across the Reception class, children have plenty of opportunities to develop their understanding across all areas of learning. These activities are attractive to children and encourage participation. Consequently, activities maintain children's attention and promote strong progress.
- Children's writing across Reception demonstrates good progress. From a range of starting points, children develop into confident writers. Staff provide opportunities for children to refine their pencil control as well as engaging them in high-quality writing opportunities. Because of this, children's physical development and writing aptitudes progress in equal measure.
- Children's early mathematical understanding is well developed. Despite children starting the Reception Year working below expectations for their age, this is rapidly improving. During the inspection, children were building towers, measuring each other's heights and designing magical wands of different lengths. Throughout each activity, children were developing their knowledge of measurement. This is indicative of the progress that children have made in this area of learning since September.
- Children learn successfully how to read in the Reception class. Staff closely track pupils' phonics progress. Through this tracking, staff can pinpoint what children need to do to make progress and provide suitable activities to provide further challenge or support. In addition, staff ensure that children access suitable reading books which provide opportunities for children to apply their knowledge of phonics.
- Safeguarding is effective across the Reception class. Staff have the relevant training to help them fulfil their roles, and children are well supervised across the provision.
- On occasions, adults intervene too soon when children are engaging in activities. Staff try to ensure that children access the full breadth of the activities on offer. However,

children already engage well. When adults intervene, it can cut short children's engagement with an activity and limit the learning opportunities.

- Over time, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been above national averages. In 2018, this proportion dipped because children's writing and reading were less developed than other aspects of the early years curriculum.

School details

Unique reference number	113805
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10077942

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	111
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nick Chapman
Headteacher	Debbie Field
Telephone number	01258 820206
Website	www.stgregorymarnhull.dorset.sch.uk/
Email address	office@stgregorymarnhull.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 November 2016

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are mixed-age classes comprising the Reception class and Year 1, Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, and Years 4 and 5. The Year 6 class is taught as a single year group.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to leadership and governance. There is a new deputy headteacher, SENCo, early years leader and subject leaders. In addition, there is a new chair of governors who has been in post since April 2018.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than national averages.
- The school works closely with a range of local schools, including primary and secondary, to check the accuracy of teachers' assessment of pupils' work and share good practice.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector met with the school's leadership team, consisting of the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the SENCo, to consider their evaluation of the school and current improvement priorities.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority and met with four representatives from the school's local governing body.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher to scrutinise assessment information and progress of current pupils.
- The lead inspector and school leaders jointly observed teaching and learning in each class. The inspector considered a range of pupils' workbooks from Years 1 to 6 across writing, mathematics and the foundation subjects.
- The lead inspector met with pupils from the Reception class and key stage 1 to listen to them read. The inspector also met with Year 6 pupils to gather their views about the school.
- The lead inspector took account of the views of 15 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. There were no responses to the pupil or staff surveys.
- The lead inspector met with the school's designated safeguarding leader. They reviewed safeguarding documentation and the school's single central register.
- The lead inspector met with middle leaders, including those responsible for leading literacy and mathematics. Inspectors also met with the SENCo, the pupil premium lead and the early years leader.

Inspection team

Nathan Kemp, lead inspector

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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