

St George's Church of England Primary School, Semington

Pound Lane, Semington, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 6LP

Inspection dates

25–26 April 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- The quality of leadership and management is inadequate. The school is reliant on external support to provide leadership capacity.
- Teaching is inadequate. Senior leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning lack rigour. They are not used well enough to help teachers to improve. Advice is imprecise.
- Governors do not undertake the full range of their statutory roles effectively. They have failed to hold senior leaders to account for the expenditure of additional funding. As a result, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have been poorly served.
- Pupils' outcomes are inadequate. Progress is too slow across a wide range of subjects, including writing, and is especially weak in mathematics.
- The curriculum is too narrow and fails to prepare pupils well enough academically for the next stage in their education.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' learning is inaccurate. Consequently, work set does not match pupils' needs and abilities.
- Teaching fails to inspire pupils. Ill-matched work leads to lapses in pupils' concentration. Consequently, pupils fail to achieve in line with their capabilities.
- The early years provision is inadequate. Until recently, leaders in the school had failed to ensure that teaching met children's needs. This has led to significant underachievement in the early years.
- Many parents who responded to Parent View raised concerns about several areas of the school's work, including their child's progress and communication between home and school.

The school has the following strengths

- Temporary leaders have worked decisively to improve the school's work. They have been successful in ensuring that safeguarding is effective and attendance has improved.
- Temporary leaders' work in establishing the school's core values is helping to raise expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils follow the school rules. They say that they feel safe.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) 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 effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance by:
 - securing leadership capacity in the school so that leaders are not overly reliant on external support
 - implementing a consistent and accurate system for assessing and tracking pupils' learning
 - ensuring that checks on teaching are thorough and provide precise and timely guidance on what teachers need to do to improve
 - ensuring that governors know the impact teaching has on pupils' progress and more rigorously check on the school's performance, holding leaders fully to account for the progress of all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - implementing recent plans to ensure that there is adequate curriculum provision
 - ensuring that provision in the early years meets the needs of the children
 - improving the level of communication with parents.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment quickly by ensuring that teachers:
 - raise expectations of what all groups of pupils can achieve to improve rates of pupils' progress
 - accurately assess what pupils can and cannot do and use this knowledge to eradicate any gaps in learning across the curriculum
 - increase their subject knowledge, especially about mathematics, so that they can plan the next steps in pupils' learning effectively
 - provide pupils with the support and guidance they need to make progress, in particular for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Improve the early years provision by ensuring that:
 - assessment is used effectively to ensure that learning and provision builds on what children know, can do and understand, so that children make rapid progress
 - the learning activities both indoors and outdoors are stimulating and promote children's learning and development.

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

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management can be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leadership is ineffective. Recent changes in leadership have begun to scratch at the surface of the entrenched problems in this failing school but there is too little positive impact and underachievement is rife.
- The Academy Trust of Melksham (ATOM) has not acted quickly enough to bring about school improvement at St George's. While the introduction of temporary leaders has been effective in uncovering the extent of the problems that exist, there is limited evidence of impact of the trust's work beyond ensuring compliance with safeguarding and improvements in pupils' behaviour. Actions to ensure improvement have been too little, too late.
- Leaders are adjusting plans for improvement as they unravel the endemic weaknesses throughout the school. Although planned actions focus on appropriate areas for development, leaders have not identified precisely how to improve key weaknesses in the school. Consequently, governors cannot evaluate the success of leaders' actions. In addition, current inaccuracies in assessment mean that any evaluations of impact are misleading.
- Until recently, weak teaching has gone unchecked. Previously, senior leaders have not understood the extent of inadequacies in teaching. Although ATOM provided additional leadership capacity early in this academic year, improvements in teaching are not evident. Leaders have not provided staff with the training and precise support to remedy weaknesses in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders have placed too little emphasis on checking pupils' progress. Over time, there has been an absence of accurate assessment information. Current leaders have not yet resolved weaknesses in assessment. Recent work within ATOM to check the quality of teachers' assessments has not been effective. As a result, pupils' underachievement is widespread.
- Leaders have failed to ensure that additional funding for eligible pupils is used effectively. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not receive the support they need to make good progress. Similarly, for the few disadvantaged pupils in the school, progress is weak.
- The curriculum is not broad and does not prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education. Temporary leaders have identified this but have not had time to implement their plans to overcome this shortcoming. Consequently, pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are underdeveloped across a range of subjects.
- Less than a quarter of the respondents to the parent questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school. Parents' concerns are extensive and cover all aspects of the school's work. Parents, staff and pupils all expressed concerns about the considerable staff absence rate. Pupils told the inspector 'We have had four different teachers this year. We don't know how long our teacher now will be here for.'
- Leaders' expenditure of the sport premium has not been effective. The specialist training planned for staff has been disrupted by staff absence. Pupils say that they

enjoy their physical education lessons, but few take part in clubs outside of the school day. Pupils report that they would like more school clubs.

- Temporary leaders' work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education has had a positive impact on pupils' attitudes. Pupils told the inspector that behaviour has improved. Pupils have an appropriate awareness of modern British values and understand how they can make a positive contribution to society.
- Temporary leaders have been successful in improving the learning environment which is more organised and clearly exemplifies the school's social values. Improvements to the school library have raised the availability of reading resources in the school.
- Temporary senior leaders have gained a good understanding of the school's weaknesses. Their work has led to improvements in pupils' attendance and behaviour. Although they are developing a more accurate view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, failings are widespread. The significant turnover of staff has also hindered improvements, and because of these weaknesses, pupils' outcomes are inadequate.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is ineffective in ensuring that pupils at St George's receive a good standard of education. Governors do not challenge senior leaders and have been too trusting of the school's pupil performance data. Governors do not have a clear enough picture of the quality of teaching and the limited impact it has on pupils' progress.
- Governors have not ensured that additional funding such as the pupil premium and the funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used well. There has been little evaluation of the impact of expenditure. Temporary leaders have made governors aware that published reports contain inaccurate information.
- Governors do not make sufficient checks to consider the effectiveness of the sport premium. Published reports do not evaluate the school's work. Too few pupils participate in additional clubs and activities.
- Governors acknowledge that the intervention by ATOM earlier this academic year, although unwelcome at the time, was necessary, as the school had limited capacity. However, there is little evidence to suggest that the intervention by ATOM has improved the quality of governance. Governors do not have a clear understanding of their roles and statutory responsibilities. Consequently, they do not hold senior leaders to account for the standards of education in the school.
- Although governors have received training in their statutory safeguarding duties, they do not yet carry out rigorous checks to satisfy themselves that the school's safeguarding policies and procedures are put into practice effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Recent improvements to safeguarding are ensuring that the culture of safeguarding is improving. Temporary leaders quickly identified that safeguarding in the school did not

meet statutory requirements. The trust successfully shared expertise from another school, which was effective in eliminating weaknesses in safeguarding. However, the temporary senior leaders check their own work, and governors have not been involved in monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.

- Adults who work in the school know their duties well because leaders have ensured that staff receive up-to-date training. For example, adults know how to spot signs of abuse and know whom to go to if they have concerns.
- Some aspects of the administration of safeguarding documentation are not well organised. Until recently, staff have not been recording incidents of poor behaviour and bullying. Although this is now firmly in place, parents express well-founded concerns around poor communication when incidents have occurred previously.
- The school has acted proportionately to respond to the recommendations of safeguarding audits from the local authority and the Trust. Areas of weakness have been actioned and resolved. Consequently, safeguarding procedures are now compliant.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teachers have weak subject knowledge and do not have a clear understanding of age related learning expectations for pupils. As a result, their expectations are too low and their assessments are inaccurate. Consequently, teachers do not plan work that meets pupils' needs. This severely stalls pupils' progress.
- Teaching does not consistently motivate or interest pupils. As a result, pupils can find it difficult to sustain their concentration, and some only complete the minimum amount of the activities set for them.
- Teachers do not routinely notice or deal with wasted learning time in lessons. Although temporary leaders have implemented a new strategy to engage pupils in their own self-assessment, teachers have not fully understood its purpose. This has an adverse effect on pupils' progress over time and inhibits their desire to achieve.
- Weaker readers are not supported in developing successful strategies to overcome barriers to their learning. For example, pupils who have weak phonic knowledge are not supported in developing strategies to help them decode letters and the sounds they make and understand the meaning of the texts they are reading.
- The teaching of writing is inadequate. Teachers' expectations are too low. Pupils do not consistently develop the basic skills needed, including spelling, punctuation and grammar, to organise their writing well for different purposes. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and develop their writing skills across the curriculum. Consequently, writing skills are poorly developed, particularly for the most able pupils.
- The teaching of phonics is weak, particularly in Reception and Year 1, where adults do not pronounce the sounds that letters make correctly. Inconsistencies in teaching have led to gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge and hampered their ability to apply phonic skills in their written work.

- The impact of additional adults is too variable. Teachers do not provide additional staff with the guidance they need to ensure that pupils' learning needs are met. Consequently, during some activities, additional support confuses and hinders pupils' learning.
- Teaching for the most able pupils is not challenging enough. Pupils have too few opportunities to deepen their understanding and apply their knowledge and skills across the curriculum.
- Parents have well-founded concerns that large amounts of homework are set to 'fill gaps' in pupils' learning.
- Teaching for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is wholly inadequate. Teachers do not take full accountability for the progress these pupils make. They do not ensure that the work set meets these pupils' needs. As a result, pupils' progress is weak and, for some, their self-esteem is low.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils' personal development requires improvement because staff do not have consistently high enough expectations of pupils. Although recent changes in leadership are raising expectations, inconsistency in staffing is hampering improvement. As a result, pupils do not aspire to achieve their best and lack the desire to aim high.
- Pupils report that there is little bullying in the school and that when it does occur it is dealt with effectively by staff. Parents who responded to the Parent View survey disagree. Inspection evidence suggests that the school deals effectively with bullying issues but that communication with parents is poor. The school does not provide parents with sufficiently accurate or timely information, and consequently many of their concerns remain unresolved.
- While pupils report that there is always a member of staff to listen to their worries, some of them are not helped to develop their self-confidence.
- Temporary leaders recently established key values that have helped to raise pupils' expectations of what they might achieve. However, there is still much to do to help pupils develop greater determination, ambition and self-esteem.
- Pupils are confident that they know how to stay safe in a variety of situations. For example, pupils told the inspector about assemblies, visits from the community police officer and lessons they have received about keeping safe online. Similarly, they demonstrated a good understanding of water and road safety.
- Most pupils expressed pride in their school. They recognise the improvements in behaviour and say that they feel safe. Initiatives such as the appointment of library helpers are supporting pupils to make contributions that are more positive to their school, and they relish these opportunities.

- Temporary leaders have made improvements to the school environment to ensure that it is safe, tidy, bright and attractive.
- The school's breakfast club provides a safe and positive start for pupils so that they are ready to learn. Club leaders have a good understanding of how to keep pupils safe and apply this understanding in the day-to-day running of both the breakfast and after-school clubs.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Although behaviour has improved significantly this term, it is not yet good. At those times when teaching fails to hold the pupils' attention, pupils become bored and distracted. Consequently, behaviour in lessons declines and hinders pupils' progress.
- Teachers do not encourage pupils to take pride in their work. As a result, pupils' attitudes to the written work seen in their workbooks is poor. Unfinished work and poor presentation hampers the quality of pupils' learning and consequently their progress slows. A few pupils display an intrinsic desire to work hard and present their work well. This is despite the weak teaching that fails to inspire or motivate them.
- Pupils treat each other with greater consideration and respect, although there are still incidents of poor behaviour in the playground. Incidents of unkind behaviour are diminishing, but still sometimes occur.
- Temporary leaders have been effective in tackling pupils' poor attendance. Although still below the national average, attendance levels are improving. The number of pupils who are frequently absent from school is reducing. However, the attendance of particular pupils, including the few pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, is still too low.
- Temporary leaders have consulted pupils when forming the new values of 'Respect, hope, love and courage'. Pupils now have a much clearer idea about the behaviour expected of them. Consequently, there has been a reduction in the number of incidents of poor behaviour. As the local authority adviser told the inspector, 'The school is now a calmer and safe place to be.'

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- In 2016, the number of Year 6 pupils who met the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was well below the national average. Small cohort sizes make national comparisons difficult, but the 2016 results did not represent good progress from these pupils' different starting points. While teachers' current assessments show that there is likely to be an improvement in 2017, work in pupils' books does not support this. Standards are typically below those expected for pupils' ages.
- Pupils in all year groups are not making good progress and, in some cases, have regressed in their learning. The work in pupils' books across different subjects shows little progress or development of skills and understanding. Work in topic books is typified by unfinished work with a lower quality of presentation than in pupils' English

books. Pupils in Year 6 who were using punctuation accurately in September are now making mistakes with basic punctuation. This represents inadequate progress.

- In mathematics, there is evidence of regression in books across year groups. For example, in September 2016, pupils in Year 4 were able to calculate fractions of number but in January 2017, many pupils reverted to colouring in squares to represent fractions such as one half. Pupils make inadequate progress because teachers do not have strong subject knowledge and do not use assessments effectively to help pupils know what to do next.
- The most able pupils make inadequate progress. Outcomes across key stage 1 and 2 in 2016 show that too few pupils reached the highest standards, particularly in mathematics. Work in books confirms that this is still the case. For example, in writing, the most able pupils are currently only producing work that is at best typical of the expected standard for their age.
- There are too few disadvantaged pupils to make national comparisons. However, work in books shows that these pupils make inadequate progress. This reflects the lack of precision with which leaders direct additional funding and analyse its impact.
- The school's own assessment information over time and the work of pupils currently in the school show that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make sufficient progress from their individual starting points. Plans to support pupils' needs are wholly inadequate. Many parents expressed concerns about their child's special educational needs not being met and described the associated low self-esteem their child exhibits as a result.
- Published data suggests that pupils' attainment in phonics has been broadly in line with the national average over the last two years. However, current outcomes confirm that few of the Year 1 pupils are likely to meet the expected standard in phonics. Pupils who did not meet the standard last year have not caught up. This represents a similar picture to outcomes in 2016. Too few of the Year 2 pupils who did not meet the expected standard in Year 1 caught up in Year 2.
- Current outcomes in the early years suggest that too few children are ready for Year 1. Historically, there has been an improvement in the proportion of children achieving a good level of development in the early years. In 2016, this was broadly in line with the national average. However, teacher assessments supported by inspection evidence show that only half of the children in the year group are likely to reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year.
- Reading records suggest that parents are supportive of their child's reading and many read frequently at home. However, pupils do not express their enjoyment of reading. Pupils who read to the inspector were not enthused by their books.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- Leadership of the early years is inadequate. Current temporary leaders have an accurate understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the early years. However, weaknesses have not been addressed until recently.

- The trust has recently assigned an early years specialist to support teaching in the early years. This support is having a positive impact, most notably in assessment, which, previously absent, is now in place. However, there is still much more to be done to eliminate persistent weaknesses.
- The curriculum on offer in the early years falls far short of meeting children's needs. Inconsistencies in teaching have led to wide gaps in children's learning. For example, many children are still practising writing their name and have very poor letter formation.
- Current teaching is not eliminating the legacy of underachievement. Teaching is inadequate. The quality of adult interactions to develop and extend children's communication is weak. The range of activities and resources available do not sufficiently develop children's knowledge and skills. Too few children are on track to achieve a good level of development this year.
- Staff have made improvements to the learning environment so that it is organised and provides a safe space for children to explore. However, both indoor and outdoor environments do not stimulate children's curiosity or sufficiently support their development.
- Staff do not provide activities which sustain children's concentration. Children lose interest quickly and adults revert to managing children's behaviour rather than supporting their learning. Consequently, children's progress stalls.
- There are too few disadvantaged pupils to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of additional funding in the early years. However, current temporary leaders have made supporting these pupils a priority and teachers' plans demonstrate this. It is too soon to determine the impact of these plans on children's progress.
- Parents express concerns about their child's progress because of the number of different teachers and the lack of communication between the school and home.

School details

Unique reference number	141923
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10033994

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	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Interim Chair	Terry Finlay
Interim Executive Headteacher	Anna Willcox
Telephone number	01380 870243
Website	www.st-georges-semington.wilts.sch.uk
Email address	admin@st-georges-semington.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Academy Trust of Melksham (ATOM). The trust was formed in April 2015 and its work is overseen by a board of trustees. The trust is responsible for seven primary schools and one secondary school.
- When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted in February 2013, it was judged to be a good school.
- The school's leadership currently comprises of a temporary leadership structure; the executive headteacher and head of school have been seconded since January 2017 from another school in the trust. An additional assistant headteacher, centrally appointed by ATOM, is providing extra leadership support for three days a week, with a focus on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance to provide details of the multi-academy trust's scheme of delegation for governance functions.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information of up-to-date evaluations on pupil premium, sport premium and the curriculum on offer.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- There is currently an interim chair of governors in place following the trust's decision to remove the autonomy of the local governing body.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is below the national average.
- A below-average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school runs a daily breakfast club and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited all classes, accompanied by the temporary head of school and the temporary executive headteacher.
- The inspector held meetings with the senior leadership team as well as the subject leader for writing, the trust's assistant headteacher for teaching and learning, the trust's advisory headteacher and a newly qualified teacher. The inspector also spoke with representatives of the school's governing body.
- During the inspection, the inspector also had telephone conversations with the chief executive officer of the trust, the trust's school improvement leader, a local authority officer and an early years leader from another of the trust's schools who is currently providing support in the early years.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including the local governing body's minutes and notes of visits, assessment information, the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, anonymised performance management records and evidence relating to safer recruitment and child protection.
- The inspector undertook a scrutiny of pupils' books to evaluate the quality of work and check the accuracy of assessment information held by the school in writing and mathematics. The inspector conducted an additional workbook scrutiny and learning walk as part of an evaluation of the breadth of the curriculum. This included an analysis of achievements in science and a sample of pupils' topic books.
- Children spoke to the inspector during various activities throughout the inspection. In addition, the inspector met with pupils at lunchtime and heard a group of pupils from a variety of year groups read.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in the breakfast club and at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspector also met with parents at the start of the second day. The 26 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were taken into account, along with seven responses to the staff online questionnaire and 33 responses from the pupil questionnaire. The lead inspector also considered responses from parents' free-text comments received during the inspection.

Inspection team

Tracy Hannon, 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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