

St Leonard's Church of England Primary Academy, Blunsdon

Linley Road, Blunsdon, Swindon, Wiltshire SN26 7AP

Inspection dates

5–6 March 2019

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Governors have not provided challenge and strategic leadership to school leaders. As a result, standards have slipped, especially in the end of key stage 2 assessments.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not making sufficient progress.
- Leaders do not have effective systems to measure the progress that pupils make. Consequently, pupils are not supported well when falling behind or challenged sufficiently when of high ability.
- Teachers' expectations are too low. Pupils present scruffy and incomplete work that goes unchallenged.
- Leaders and governors do not have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. Their plans are not improving the school.
- Leaders do not have a clear overview of the curriculum on offer. Across a range of subjects, teachers do not use their knowledge of what pupils know, can do and understand. Consequently, pupils make weak progress.
- Leaders do not manage the performance of staff effectively. There is a lack of accountability. Middle leaders lack the necessary leadership skills. As a result, there is too much inconsistency in teaching.
- Too many pupils are disengaged from their learning. Staff do not have an effective behaviour management policy. As a result, some poor behaviour continues, and staff do not know how to deal with it.

The school has the following strengths

- Most pupils are polite and respectful, especially at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The teaching of phonics is successful.
- Pupils understand and discuss current affairs well.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average.

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 quality of governors' leadership so that:
 - leaders have the capacity and skills to monitor the work of teachers effectively
 - governors support and challenge leaders to bring about the improvements needed
 - pupils' progress improves, especially in key stage 2
 - the spending of public funds is effective so that disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND make strong progress
 - the curriculum is organised and sequenced so that pupils are receiving a consistent offer of what they need to know
 - leaders ensure that monitoring and accountability are effective in securing rapid progress for pupils.
- Leaders, including governors, must ensure that:
 - they quicken the pace of change
 - monitoring and evaluation is accurate, so that actions have an impact on the main priorities that will improve standards and the quality of education in the school
 - they manage the performance of staff more effectively
 - processes and procedures for gathering information are more efficient and show the progress pupils make from their starting points over time
 - they have a clear and manageable policy for improving behaviour that is understood and accepted by parents, carers, staff and pupils
 - they analyse and tackle the root causes of misbehaviour, so that a few pupils do not continue to display poor conduct.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - middle leaders have the capacity and skills to monitor the work of teachers so that teaching is more consistent
 - teachers have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve and do in every key stage, including Reception
 - the presentation of pupils' work is of a consistently high standard
 - the most able pupils in all year groups, including those who are disadvantaged, are provided with learning that is sufficiently challenging and deepens their thinking

- pupils with lower ability are given sufficient structure and support to make better progress over time.

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

An external review of pupil premium spending should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2017. Although the chair of governors has been very supportive, the headteacher has not received appropriate leadership training. Consequently, the role is overwhelming. Leaders have not received the necessary training and development. As a result, capacity for securing further improvement is poor.
- No external support has been provided to leaders and governors on a regular basis. There has been no external validation or guidance for several years. Leaders have not had an up-to-date and accurate understanding of the standards in the school. Actions to stem the decline in standards, especially in key stage 2, happen too slowly.
- Governors do not hold senior leaders to account stringently for the school's performance, including the use of the pupil premium, the use of the physical education (PE) and sport premium and SEND funding. They do not ensure that the deployment of staff and resources delivers improving outcomes for pupils, especially in key stage 2.
- Leaders do not tackle poor teaching, learning and assessment effectively. As a result, teaching is too inconsistent. Too often, older pupils become disengaged as they are not challenged or supported well in their work.
- Leaders and governors do not use professional development effectively to improve teaching. They do not monitor accurately to identify and spread the pockets of good practice across the school.
- Leaders do not manage the funding for pupils with SEND effectively. They are not checking the progress of pupils with SEND well enough. Therefore, they do not know if these pupils are doing as well as expected. Support for pupils with SEND is inconsistent.
- Leaders are not taking effective steps to secure good behaviour from pupils who find it difficult to regulate their own behaviour. There is no consistent approach to discipline.
- The broad and balanced curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn. However, there is no sequential planning, so learning is haphazard.
- The new personal, social, health and economic curriculum contributes well to pupils' welfare. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and fundamental British values.
- Staff and pupils work together well to prevent any form of direct or indirect discriminatory behaviour. Leaders, staff and pupils do not tolerate prejudiced behaviour.
- It is recommended that the school should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- Governance is not effective.
- Members, trustees and governors are one and the same. This has led to a lack of accountability.
- The chair of governors is keen to do what is best for the school but lacks clear guidance. She has sought advice from the diocese, but unforeseen circumstances have delayed the support needed.
- There are new governors who are willing to learn their role and challenge more effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have implemented training to protect pupils from the influences of radicalisation and extremism. Leaders and staff take appropriate action to identify pupils who may be at risk of neglect or abuse. The designated safeguarding lead reports concerns in a timely fashion.
- Pupils learn well about keeping themselves safe in the community and when using the internet and social media.
- Administrative records are in order and staff checks for safer recruitment are stringent.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teachers do not plan effectively. They fail to consider the ability of pupils. This leads to the most able pupils losing valuable learning time.
- Teachers do not make good use of what they know pupils can do or understand. As a result, teaching fails to meet pupils' needs or build on prior learning.
- Teachers' expectations are too low. Too often, teachers accept work that is incomplete and poorly presented. Too many pupils chat and disengage from their work on a regular basis. This hinders the progress that pupils make, especially older pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make as much progress as other pupils. The pupil premium is not used to support them well enough. Leaders have not given consideration of what barriers there are to the learning of disadvantaged pupils or made effective plans to remedy any issues.
- Leaders do not provide oversight of the progress made by pupils with SEND. Teachers are not clear about the impact of provision for pupils with SEND because there is a lack of effective evaluation.
- Teaching does not ensure that pupils review their work effectively or consistently. Older pupils do not know how to proofread and edit their work so errors continue. Similarly, younger pupils continue to write without finger spaces and invert letters and numbers incorrectly.

- The school provides parents with information annually. However, the reports do not explain how well their child is progressing, how well their child is doing in relation to the standards expected and what their child needs to do to improve.
- Teachers' questioning is too variable in quality. A few teachers, particularly in key stage 1, help pupils understand new concepts by reshaping tasks and explanations well.
- Teachers set homework in line with the school's policy. It has limited impact on progress in mathematics and literacy as it is not always relevant to the work in hand. However, some pupils show dedication, research skills and originality in their responses to creative tasks.
- The teaching of phonics is successful in supporting Year 1 pupils to learn effectively. Pupils master complex words.
- There are pockets of good practice within certain subjects, such as PE. Overall, however, the lack of monitoring of teachers' work hinders the improvement of teachers' practice.

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 attitudes to learning of pupils in key stage 2 are not consistently positive, which impedes the progress they make.
- Pupils lack the will to do better and find out for themselves when they are stuck. As a result, pupils display a lack of engagement that results in persistent low-level disruption and reduced learning.
- There are few incidents of bullying. Neither pupils or parents see this as an issue in the school.
- Pupils enjoy challenging discussions. When pupils engage with their learning, their attitudes improve. Older pupils discuss issues, such as alcohol abuse, well and show a maturity in their responses. Similarly, other pupils expressed meaningful comments on the deprivation in other parts of the world.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They learn about e-safety, road safety and careful use of social media. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy diet.
- Pupils with complex needs receive emotional support from a trained teaching assistant which aids their emotional stability.
- The faith ethos is an important factor in pupils' lives. Pupils respect their learning about faith.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.

- A significant minority of pupils show a lack of respect for each other and staff when in lessons. Too often, teachers do not challenge pupils effectively or moderate pupils' conduct. Teachers do not have a systematic policy for managing pupils' behaviour. There is no consistency from staff, which is confusing for pupils and leads to low expectations.
- Some parents expressed concern about poor behaviour going unchallenged and inspectors saw this, too. The inability of teachers to plan work that meets pupils' needs in the core subjects is a critical factor in the disaffection shown by pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes, though lively, is more appropriate. Older pupils respect younger pupils on the playground. If pupils do not have a friend to play with, there is a place to stand and others will then include them. Pupils said there is no stigma attached to this.
- Attendance is high overall and better than the average. This is a strength of the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils enter the school with attainment that is above average. However, the progress they make while at school is poor. The school's progress measures put them in the bottom 20% of the country for literacy and the bottom 5% for mathematics. Leaders do not check pupils' progress effectively and fail to advise teachers on how to improve. Teaching does not build on what pupils already know and understand. As a result, pupils' progress has been declining for the past three years in the end of key stage 2 assessments.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve below others in school and nationally. Teachers are not meeting their needs. The additional funding, pupil premium, is not used effectively to support these pupils.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) uses the school's assessment systems to check on the progress of pupils with SEND. However, the assessments undertaken are not based on pupils' prior learning. Consequently, the assessment is not valid, particularly for any interventions that the SENCo has instigated. The SENCo uses strategies to support pupils with SEND but does not monitor the impact on learning over time.
- Teaching assistants work with pupils with SEND but there is no monitoring of their actions, no training and no observation of their work. This has led to poor outcomes for many pupils with SEND.
- Too many pupils in key stage 2 cannot communicate, read, write or apply mathematics as well as they should, so they do not make sufficient progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills before moving to secondary school. This has been the case for three years.
- Attainment in the end of key stage 1 assessments is strong in literacy and mathematics.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The curriculum in Reception does not offer a broad range of experiences that challenge children. Children spend much of their time playing without any clear purpose. This limits the progress they make over time.
- Children come in with skills that are typical for their age and many show skills that are above average. Although there are a few children who have below average skills, this is a minority. Children are gaining their early learning goals. However, the number of children exceeding has stayed the same for several years. Leaders do not use assessments of what children can do to plan activities that are suitably challenging. Academic expectations are too low.
- The least able children are not receiving teaching and provision that helps them catch up in reading, writing and numeracy.
- Teaching does not promote challenge and excellence. Play and exploration do not focus adequately on children applying their letters and sounds knowledge. This is hampering them from making rapid progress in reading and writing.
- There are too few opportunities for children to develop numeracy and measuring skills independently.
- Children like to go outside to use the climbing frame and this is the most used equipment. They ignore some apparatus. Children showed a lack of respect for some equipment because its function was not clear to them, for example the water measuring pipes.
- The Reception leader manages most children's behaviour consistently but a lack of engagement in some activities hinders children's learning.
- Children are safe. The leader applies statutory welfare requirements effectively.
- The leader's assessment of children's skills, knowledge and understanding when they join the school is accurate. In addition, the leader ensures that children can meet every learning goal. She engages with parents to ensure that this happens at home as well as at school.
- Children gain an understanding of risk through activities that encourage them to explore their environment.
- Children are keen learners. Children are ready for school and able to sit and listen well to the teacher, adults and each other.

School details

Unique reference number	137610
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10086907

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	206
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Clare Lindley
Headteacher	Nicky Mills
Telephone number	01793 721423
Website	www.stleonardsblunston.org.uk/
Email address	admin@stleonards.swindon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Leonard's Primary Academy converted to an academy in February 2012. The school is a member of the Bristol Diocese. Prior to its conversion, the school was graded outstanding in the inspection which took place in May 2010.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2017.
- The school is smaller than the typical primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons jointly with the headteacher and the chair of governors.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils from key stage 2, as well as with pupils informally across the site.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and members of the governing body/trustees.
- Information and other documentary evidence were evaluated, including that relating to safeguarding, assessment and school evaluation.

Inspection team

Kathy Maddocks, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Wendy D'Arcy

Ofsted Inspector

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