

St Mary's CofE (A) Primary School

Mucklestone, Market Drayton, TF9 4DN

Inspection dates 20–21 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders, managers and governors have ensured that teaching and achievement have improved since the last inspection and are now both good.
- Pupils currently make good progress, whatever their circumstances or ability. This includes disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Positive relationships, between pupils themselves and with staff, mean that the school is a harmonious community where all pupils thrive academically and socially.
- Provision for the early years is good. Children learn well in the Reception class and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is particularly strong. Pupils learn the values they need to cope with life in modern Britain.
- The new National Curriculum has been successfully introduced. Staff have ensured that pupils in the mixed-age classes are given topics that capture their interest and motivate them to learn more.
- Pupils enjoy school and are kept very safe there. Their behaviour is good and they are keen to work hard.
- Governors have played a full part improving the school since the last inspection. They support and challenge the headteacher effectively.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not always challenging enough to ensure that all pupils, including the most able, make consistently rapid progress in writing and mathematics.
- Recent improvements in pupils' writing in literacy are not always sustained in their work in other subjects. Teachers do not make clear their expectations for pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar in these subjects, so standards are not as high as they should be.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning across all year groups. Some observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Pupils' workbooks were scrutinised by the inspector.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and talked to them about their reading.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, members of the governing body, staff, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- A variety of documents were examined, including those relating to safeguarding and the school's improvement plans.
- The inspector considered the views expressed in questionnaires returned by six members of staff.
- The inspector took account of the 22 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and also spoke to a number of parents.

Inspection team

Jeremy Bird, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mary's Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years are taught in one full-time Reception / Year 1 class. Elsewhere, pupils are taught in two classes, each of which includes pupils from more than one year group.
- There have been significant changes in staffing in the last two years, with all the current teachers joining the school since September 2014.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The school runs a daily breakfast club. This was included in the inspection.
- The school works closely with a Local Leader of Education from Parkside Primary School.
- There were too few pupils in Year 6 in 2014 for the government's floor standards to be applicable.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, including for the most-able pupils, by ensuring that:
 - teachers are more rigorous in checking that pupils are using appropriate grammar, punctuation and accurate spelling in their writing, and make their expectations for these skills clearer when pupils are writing in subjects other than English
 - pupils work on harder tasks in their mathematics lessons.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, governors and staff work closely together and are an effective team. Their work is focused on providing the best for all pupils, both socially and academically. As a result, pupils all achieve and behave well, and they enjoy school.
- School leaders have made effective use of systems to track pupils' progress, so that staff quickly spot any problems and address them quickly. This contributes to the school's good provision of equal opportunities for all pupils. The school has fully implemented the recent changes to the National Curriculum and the headteacher is now working closely with other local schools to revise its assessment arrangements so that they, too, reflect new national requirements.
- Leaders oversee the quality of teaching and manage teachers' performance well. All teachers are set clear targets based on the progress of pupils, their responsibilities in school, and their training needs. Their progress towards these targets is monitored regularly and they are given good guidance by the headteacher and training to help them succeed in meeting them. Teachers' targets are appropriately linked to pay so that only good performance is rewarded.
- Subject leaders are relatively inexperienced but are leading developments in their subjects well, so that the new curriculum requirements are now in place in all subjects. The headteacher has ensured appropriate training has been offered and the teachers have valued and taken up these opportunities. Some of this training has been made available through the school's partnership with a Local Leader of Education, with teachers visiting other schools to observe outstanding practice.
- The headteacher and teachers have ensured that the curriculum, including in the early years, promotes pupils' achievement and reflects their abilities and interests. The school places a firm emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are developing strong values. They learn to treat each other with respect and to value diversity. Staff ensure that pupils understand the importance of treating people fairly, and do not tolerate discrimination of any kind. Pupils develop a very good understanding of democracy, illustrated by their work in developing manifestos for recent school elections. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- The school uses its small amount of pupil premium funding well to ensure that eligible pupils do as well as their classmates academically. The funding has also been used to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are able to be involved in all aspects of school life, such as attending visits, music lessons and sporting activities.
- The school makes good use of its primary school sport funding. It has met its aims of ensuring that all pupils can take part in sporting opportunities and has provided effective training for its own staff. This has enabled pupils to take part in more after-school sports clubs, with specialist coaches employed, as well as in a greater range of competitions, including in football and cricket.
- The schools' safeguarding arrangements are comprehensive, fully meet statutory requirements and are effective in ensuring the safety of pupils at all times.
- The local authority provides good support to the school. It has brokered partnership arrangements with other schools, including the involvement of a Local Leader of Education. Its representative visits the school every half term to meet with the headteacher and governors to monitor and evaluate the school's performance. This work has helped school leaders to make the improvements identified at the previous inspection.
- Parents hold the school in high regard. The responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire are very positive, as were the comments of those parents who spoke to the inspector. Curriculum workshops have been well attended, and parents welcome the opportunity to meet with governors prior to termly governors' meetings.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body has played a significant role in improving the school since the last inspection. Governors have challenged and supported the headteacher effectively and are now ensuring that other staff are developing strong leadership skills.
- Governors have a good understanding of the information about pupils' performance and are using this well to check pupils' progress in every year group. Governors ensure that the pupil premium is being used effectively to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils.
- Every governor has a clear, individual role. These roles include working with school staff to monitor how well pupils are progressing in different subjects. This has helped to keep the governing body well informed about how well teachers are performing, and has ensured that only good teaching is rewarded with increases in salary. In recent years, governors have tackled underperformance effectively, with the result that teaching is now good in every class.
- The governor with responsibility for safeguarding regularly visits the school and ensures that all statutory requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They treat each other and adults with respect, and form good relationships with each other and with staff. All pupils work and play together well. They share equipment sensibly and discuss their ideas with enthusiasm. This was exemplified in the breakfast club, where pupils enjoyed working together to complete examples of high-quality art work.
- Older pupils are kind and considerate towards younger ones. The school council recognise this as a strength in their school. Pupils are particularly good at working together in the mixed-age classes. They value these opportunities, as they know how they help to both improve their learning and develop friendships. Such relationships contribute greatly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils understand why good behaviour is important at all times of the school day. They say that any minor incidents are quickly resolved by adults if they cannot sort them out for themselves.
- Pupils work hard in class and present their work well. They generally listen attentively to all staff and to each other. However, their levels of concentration occasionally lapse when they are not sufficiently challenged by the tasks they are working on.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. As a result, parents, staff and governors are very confident that the pupils are safe and well cared for, both in and out of school; for example, on school visits.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and are safe. They say this is principally because they know that the adults and their friends make sure of this by looking out for one another.
- Pupils contribute well to their own safety through their sensible behaviour around school and their care and concern for each other. All pupils, including those in the Reception class, understand how to react in risky situations. For example, the inspector witnessed the whole school being evacuated due to the fire alarm sounding. The pupils lined up and exited the building sensibly and safely. Risk assessments are effective in supporting staff to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying and know it can take different forms, such as cyber-bullying. They know how bullying differs from other poor behaviour. They say it does not occur in their school, but that they would have confidence that they would know what to do if it occurred and that the adults would rapidly deal with it.
- Attendance is above the national average and this has been sustained over the current academic year. Pupils love coming to school and this has led to such high attendance rates for all groups of pupils. Only in

exceptional circumstances will the school authorise parental requests to take their children out of school in term time.

The quality of teaching is good

- The school's records of checks made on the quality of teaching show that it has steadily improved over the past year and is now good. Inspection evidence confirms this view.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that all pupils receive the support they need during lessons to complete tasks and to understand what is being taught. Staff have secure subject knowledge and use this to ask questions skilfully in order to check pupils' understanding.
- Lessons are orderly and teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. Routines are well established and relationships good from the moment children enter the early years. Consequently, across the school, pupils get on sensibly, quickly completing work in the time available. Teachers treat pupils with care and fairness. This means that pupils, in turn, like and respect their teachers, and are keen to please them by working hard and behaving well.
- Teachers ensure that pupils enjoy the interesting activities they set, which challenge pupils most of the time so that they have to think and develop their ideas in depth. For example, pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 maintained high levels of concentration when researching facts about the Great Fire of London. This was because they knew their teachers expected them to develop their ideas in full. Pupils were able to use computers and role play confidently to show what they had found out. However, this high level of challenge is not consistently evident in all the activities teachers set pupils, and this sometimes restricts their progress in writing and mathematics, particularly for the most-able pupils.
- In the Reception class, children chose to learn more about dragons in their 'animal magic' topic. They worked together effectively to imagine the cave in which their dragon lived. They were then motivated to write their own sentences to describe their scenes. Their work showed good progress when compared with previous writing.
- The teaching of reading is good. Teachers and teaching assistants have strong subject knowledge and, as a result, they teach reading effectively. Children in the early years are quick to secure their understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) and good practice is maintained through Key Stages 1 and 2. In the Reception class, the teacher is skilled at modelling how words fit together in sentences, with children then remembering what to focus on when they come to write for themselves.
- Writing is taught systematically, with innovations from this year showing a positive impact in pupils' progress in their literacy books. The same systematic approach does not extend to writing in subjects other than English. This means that pupils do not write on other subjects to the same high standard that they do in literacy books.
- Progress in writing is not as rapid as it could be because not all teachers check carefully that pupils use appropriate grammar and punctuation, as well as accurate spelling, other than in literacy lessons. This means that pupils, particularly the most able, do not know how to use these skills to make their writing in other subjects better.
- The teaching of mathematics is good, with a balance struck between calculation work and problem-solving activities. This can be seen in pupils' workbooks. Pupils in all year groups are not consistently challenged enough in their mathematics work, however, spending too much time working on tasks that they have already mastered. For the most-able pupils, there is insufficient work set which requires them to apply their higher-level skills.
- Teaching assistants work effectively and are well briefed to support pupils' learning. They are particularly effective in supporting the good progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.

- Teachers set homework that encourages pupils to think and present their work in imaginative ways. Clear tasks are assigned and pupils are left to present their understanding in any way they choose. This has proved effective in motivating pupils to continue their learning outside of school.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in Reception with skills and understanding that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress and most children join Year 1 with a good level of development across all areas of learning.
- Pupils achieve well through Key Stage 1, attaining above-average results over the past three years in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment in Key Stage 2 has been broadly average over time. Progress across Key Stage 2 was a little uneven last year, with an above-average proportion making good progress but a lower-than-average proportion making expected progress, especially in reading. The general picture of pupils' achievement is, however, distorted by the very small numbers in each cohort. The current Year 6 cohort is making good progress overall and is on track to attain high levels by the end of this year.
- By the end of Year 1, pupils have a good knowledge of linking letters to sounds (phonics) because of the success of the school's systematic approach to the teaching of phonics. The proportion of pupils who reached the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2014 was above the national average. This was an improvement on the previous year. This year, a greater proportion of pupils are working at the required standard.
- Pupils enjoy reading, and they are making good progress in reading in all classes. Pupils are expected to read in all subjects and they use their reading skills to gain a good understanding of the topics taught. They readily talk about the books they read in groups at school, and they read from a range of sources, including the internet, when carrying out research.
- Pupils' progress in all year groups, this year, in writing, while good, is not as strong as in reading. The inspector's scrutiny of pupils' writing in books across all subjects indicates that some pupils, especially the most able, do not consistently use correct grammar, punctuation and accurate spelling when writing in subjects other than English. This slows progress in writing.
- In all year groups, pupils make good progress in mathematics as a result of being able to successfully use their mathematical skills in different tasks, such as problems involving money. Pupils of all abilities do not make as rapid progress as they could because they are not always challenged enough in their mathematics lessons. This limits the progress they make, especially for the most-able pupils.
- Progress is good in a range of subjects. Pupils talk about their enjoyment of science and the work in their books shows how they use experiments to effectively learn about different topics. Skills in physical education are developing quickly, showing the positive impact of the sports funding.
- Disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress as their classmates. There were too few disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 in 2014 to compare their attainment with that of their classmates or with pupils nationally without the risk of identifying individuals.
- The school records show that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress relative to their starting points.
- The most-able pupils make steady progress but it is clear from talking to the pupils and looking in their books that some of them are capable of doing better in writing and mathematics.

The early years provision is good

- The early years is well led and managed, with the leader clear in her vision for further improvement.

Records of children's achievements are shared with parents through their individual 'learning journals', which record their activities and progress. The leader has ensured that the indoor and outdoor learning environments are well designed, enabling the children to learn effectively about all aspects of the curriculum.

- The good start children get in the Reception Year prepares them very well for their time in school. They are ready for the move into Year 1 because many have reached a good level of development in their learning.
- Teaching in the early years is good. Adults ensure that children work purposefully at all times, including in activities they have chosen for themselves. The adults question children thoughtfully, consolidating their understanding and developing their vocabulary and mathematical skills. They encourage the children to ask their own questions about topics so that staff can take their interests into account when planning activities. As a result, children are well motivated to learn.
- Teachers check and record children's progress regularly so that activities build on their previous learning and their interests. This underpins their good achievement.
- Behaviour is good and children are kept very safe. They get on well with each other and cooperate very well in their learning, readily discussing their ideas and sharing equipment as they play. This provides a firm foundation for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124342
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	462559

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally-Ann Shotton
Headteacher	Jane Hughes
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2013
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