

St Mary's Church of England Controlled Infant School

Church Green, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX28 4AZ

Inspection dates 11–12 February 2015

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | 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.

- St Mary's is an extremely caring school community where staff go to great lengths to support pupils and their families.
- Learning gets off to a good start in the early years. Children quickly settle into the stimulating environment, make good progress and become keen learners.
- Throughout their time at the school, pupils make good progress in both their learning and their personal development. In 2014, because of good teaching, the standards of attainment reached at the end of Year 2 were higher than average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged make at least the same good progress as other pupils in the school, as do those with special educational needs.
- Teaching is good with some which is outstanding. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to provide a good level of support to pupils with any additional needs
- Attendance has improved and is now average.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They learn to respect each other and the adults around them. Pupils settle quickly to their work and enjoy their learning.
- Procedures to ensure that pupils are safe are outstanding. As a result, pupils feel extremely safe and very well looked after by staff.
- The dedicated headteacher is highly ambitious for every pupil. The deputy headteacher and the strong staff team share her ambition to ensure pupils reach their full potential in both their personal development and academic achievement.
- School leaders, including governors, have consistently improved pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching through a period of significant turbulence. The school continues to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Children in the early years do not have a wide enough range of opportunities to reinforce their learning when they learn outdoors.
- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure that a higher proportion of the pupils make rapid progress.
- Teachers do not always make sure that pupils make improvements to their work following teacher feedback and marking.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons. Three of these observations were completed jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also observed pupils at breaks and lunchtimes and observed a whole-school assembly.
- Discussions were held with pupils, staff, governors, the headteacher and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 53 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and of conversations with parents. She also took account of the 12 responses to staff questionnaires.
- A wide range of documents were examined, including: samples of pupils' work, information about pupils' progress, the school's development plan and view of its own performance, records of any poor behaviour, and safeguarding documents.
- The inspector listened to pupils read, and observed the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make).

Inspection team

Carol Warrant, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mary's is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported by the pupil premium, is below that found nationally. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is also below that found nationally.
- Almost all pupils are from a White British heritage.
- Children in the Reception class attend full time.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes in teaching staff and the governing body.
- The school is part of the Witney Partnership of schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching so that more pupils make rapid progress by:
 - ensuring that pupils are encouraged to respond to the good advice from their teachers on how to improve their work
 - extending the outdoor learning opportunities for children in Reception.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The school has been well led and managed since the previous inspection. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, other leaders and governors have ensured that teaching is good and that all groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Leaders have created a harmonious school community where pupils can learn and develop. Teachers and support staff work well together and strive to do their very best for the pupils and their families.
- Leaders place considerable emphasis on the care, protection and safety of pupils. Safeguarding in the school is outstanding and, as a result, pupils are very safe at school and extremely well looked after.
- Leaders and staff establish strong relationships with pupils, manage them well and ensure that pupils are well behaved. All pupils have full access to the learning opportunities provided and the school effectively tackles all forms of discrimination.
- Priorities are clearly stated in the school's improvement plan and the school's own view of its effectiveness is both realistic and rigorous. This is because school leaders effectively check on the quality of learning and teaching in the school and have a clear view of how they can continue to raise standards. Leaders are aware, for instance, of the need to improve the effectiveness of marking.
- The leadership and management of teaching are given strong emphasis. Leaders check the quality of teaching on a regular basis. Arrangements for teachers' performance management contribute successfully to the improvement of teaching, because targets for development are closely linked to pupils' progress and to the priorities in the school's improvement plan.
- Teachers are well supported to improve the quality of their teaching, particularly through the training they receive. There is a clear link between performance and pay levels. Good performance is rewarded and any underachievement quickly tackled. There is effective work in partnership with other schools to continually improve teachers' practice. This is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Newly qualified teachers receive good mentoring and support from experienced colleagues.
- The leadership of key areas such as English, mathematics and early years are all effective. Leaders are fully engaged in checking pupils' progress and in improving standards in their areas of responsibility. As a result pupils achieve well. Pupils' progress is monitored regularly. Any differences in the achievement of the different groups of pupils, such as disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs, diminish increasingly rapidly as they progress through the school.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to help disadvantaged pupils. Pupils with additional needs are identified quickly and supported through intervention activities that are closely matched to their learning and social needs. This contributes to the school's success in promoting equality of opportunity for all.
- The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils by ensuring that all groups of pupils are appropriately challenged to make good progress by adapting activities effectively to their varying needs and abilities. The curriculum is made more exciting by the range of trips and visitors to school that provide pupils with memorable experiences. For example, during the inspection pupils in Year 2 cooked and enthusiastically tasted food from Mexico, and a parent visited the Reception class and shared Chinese writing and food. These activities were part of topic work, studying lifestyles in other countries as part of the school's 'International Week'.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Through assemblies and teaching, the school successfully promotes values such as friendship, trust, perseverance and compassion. Pupils show a good understanding of their own and different faiths. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The primary school sports funding is directed well to improve staff expertise and employ a specialist sports coach. Rigorous checks make certain that it is making a difference to pupils' achievement and well-being. Consequently, pupils are developing a good understanding of the role exercise plays in a healthy lifestyle.
- The local authority knows the school well and has a clear understanding of pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching in the school. It provides effective advice and support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Governors are highly committed to and supportive of the school. They attend training so they have the knowledge and skills needed to hold school leaders to account for standards at the school. The governing body has an accurate view of pupils' achievement, including by reviewing data showing how well the school performs in comparison to others. Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching because they receive comprehensive reports from the headteacher which they rigorously question and challenge. Governors check that systems to manage

staff performance, including tackling any underperformance in teaching, are implemented and that pay reflects how effective teachers are. The budget is prudently spent. They also ensure the pupil premium funding is used to support those pupils for whom it is intended and spending has a positive impact on eligible pupils. Governors make sure that current statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding pupils, are met. Arrangements to keep pupils and staff safe are extremely effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Good behaviour starts in Reception because high expectations and routines are quickly established. Throughout the school, pupils show enthusiasm for learning and are eager to participate in the wide range of activities provided. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their learning in phonics, mathematics and writing. Visits and visitors are clearly popular. Their positive attitudes and good behaviour contribute to their good learning and achievement.
- Almost all parents who completed the online survey stated that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved. The pupils themselves stated that most pupils in the school are well behaved most of the time and that staff quickly sort out any problems if they occur. The few incidences of inappropriate behaviour are thoroughly recorded and followed up to minimise the chance of repeat incidents.
- Pupils are cooperative, friendly and polite. They work well in pairs or small groups when required to do so. Through their studies, visitors and visits, pupils have gained a good understanding of different cultures and faiths. They enthusiastically take on additional responsibilities such as serving on the school council.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- All parents who completed the Parent View survey stated that their children feel safe and are well cared for at school. Pupils told the inspectors that they felt very safe at school and that they were always well looked after by the staff. The very positive views held by parents and pupils reflect the findings of the inspection.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of different types of bullying but are adamant that it just does not happen at school. They were equally confident that should any bullying occur, it would be quickly sorted out by staff. They are aware of how to keep safe when using the internet both in school and at home.
- The headteacher provides very strong leadership on safeguarding matters. The school takes every step possible to ensure that all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable, are extremely well cared for and protected. Case studies of the care and support for individual pupils provide convincing evidence of the school's highly effective safeguarding arrangements.
- Two dedicated rooms provide a sanctuary for pupils who need to share their concerns and build their resilience to changing circumstances. Such nurturing is highly effective.
- The robust systems for checking and recording safety matters ensure that all concerns are swiftly dealt with and important points are not missed. All staff are systematically checked prior to their appointment to the school. Staff and governors are highly vigilant in carrying out regular risk assessments and make sure that the school is a very safe place for pupils to be.
- Attendance has improved consistently and is now broadly average. The school works closely with parents to help them understand the importance of children attending school regularly.

The quality of teaching is good

- The headteacher's relentless drive to tackle and eradicate any teaching that requires improvement has successfully raised standards. Pupils make good progress because of the good quality of teaching across the school. This is confirmed by evidence of teaching observed during the inspection, work seen in pupils' books and through the checks made by school leaders.
- Teachers' planning is thorough and ensures that lessons build steadily on pupils' skills in literacy, reading and mathematics. Teachers are skilled at assessing pupils' understanding during lessons and adapt their teaching where necessary to ensure pupils make good progress.

- Teachers expect pupils to do their very best and the pupils respond well to these challenges. Teachers establish very positive relationships with their pupils.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide guidance on possible improvements. However, pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to respond to their teacher's good advice in order to raise standards even further.
- Staff provide good support for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs. The additional support given by highly skilled teaching assistants to disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs is tailored closely to the individual pupils' needs and also used to help boost their confidence. This high quality support contributes very well to the good progress of these pupils.
- The most able pupils reach above expected standards compared with others nationally in all subjects. Teachers know their pupils well and are successful in engaging and motivating them to work hard and make good progress.
- Pupils who read with the inspector demonstrated the good impact of the teaching of phonics (matching letters to the sounds that they make). Pupils used these skills to work out unfamiliar words and even surprised themselves when they persevered to work out 'really tricky' words. Additional training for staff has led to more focused and effective teaching.
- Pupils receive effective demonstration and guidance from staff in writing. Grammar, punctuation and spelling are promoted well. Pupils have opportunities to write for different purposes and are given opportunities to apply writing skills in a range of subjects. This consolidates their achievement.
- The teaching of mathematics ensures that pupils make good progress. Learning is often practical and active and this brings learning alive and makes it fun. New resources have been purchased to speed up progress in mathematics even further. However, there are some examples in pupils' books in Key Stage 1 where teachers' marking has identified errors but which subsequently have not been corrected. This means that pupils do not always learn from their mistakes.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children make good progress in Reception. This good progress continues through Years 1 and 2. All groups of pupils make expected or better progress and achieve well. Since the previous inspection, attainment by the end of Year 2 has been consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils are keen readers and read a wide range of books. Younger readers use their knowledge of letter sounds well, alongside clues from illustrations, to help read new words. An above average proportion of Year 1 pupils attained the expected standard in the phonics check in 2014. Reading for pleasure is becoming increasingly well embedded from the time children start school.
- Pupils make good progress in writing. The work in their books shows a steady progression in their ability to write grammatically correct sentences neatly, use an increasing range of punctuation and make their writing more interesting. Their writing helps them to make good records of their topic studies.
- Attainment and progress in mathematics have been above average since the previous inspection. Pupils like numeracy lessons, because they find the work interesting and challenging. They present work neatly and have plenty of opportunity to apply their knowledge to solving problems.
- Although in 2014, standards reached by disadvantaged pupils were lower than their classmates and pupils nationally, this is because a high proportion also had complex special educational needs. Disadvantaged pupils receive carefully planned support and the school's own data show that most disadvantaged pupils make good progress. Gaps in their attainment compared to that of other pupils rapidly diminish as they progress through the school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs also make good progress throughout the school, from their individual starting points. The progress of these pupils is checked regularly and additional support is expertly targeted to ensure all are making good progress. High quality teaching assistants complement the work done in lessons when teaching individuals and small groups in and out of the class.
- The most able pupils achieve well overall. A higher than average proportion of pupils reached the higher Level 3 in reading and writing in Year 2 in 2014 and an average proportion did so in mathematics. This represents good progress for these pupils.

The early years provision**is good**

- The early years provision is well led and managed. The staff work well as a team in planning and providing interesting learning activities for all groups of children. There are effective systems for checking and recording children's attainment and progress. This information is used well to plan teaching and learning.
- Good induction procedures, including home visits and effective partnerships with pre-school providers, enable children to settle into Reception quickly.
- Children enter the Reception classes with knowledge, understanding and skills lower than typically found for their age. Children make good progress in all areas of learning because they are well taught and are provided with interesting activities which are well suited to the needs of different groups. Consequently, an above average proportion of children reach the level of development that is typical for their age by the end of their Reception year.
- Teachers and support staff successfully develop children's speaking and listening skills and extend their vocabulary. The development of children's reading skills, particularly phonics, is given a high priority. Children make good progress in working with number and solving basic problems. With good guidance and direction from adults, they also make good progress in early writing skills. Imaginative role play and creative areas promote language and creativity well.
- The new Reception area has spacious outdoor facilities including covered areas. However, the outdoor facilities are not used fully to enhance children's learning. There is not a wide enough range of outdoor learning opportunities to extend and reinforce the good indoor learning.
- In Reception, children are safe and well cared for. Adults establish strong relationships with the children, and this leads to good behaviour. The children grow in confidence and relate well to adults and to their classmates. They share learning resources and take turns. They clearly enjoy their learning. Children are well prepared for Year 1.

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

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| Unique reference number | 123137 |
| Local authority | Oxfordshire |
| Inspection number | 448846 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 88 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Hannah Whittaker |
| Headteacher | Sally Clarke |
| Date of previous school inspection | 19–20 May 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01993 702387 |
| Email address | office.3207@st-marys-witney.oxon.sch.uk |

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