

St Mary the Virgin Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	114553
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	378887
Inspection dates	2–3 May 2012
Lead inspector	Clive Dunn

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Ball
Headteacher	Andrea McGlew
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2008
School address	High Street Hartfield TN7 4AA
Telephone number	01892 770221
Fax number	01892 770407
Email address	office@st-maryhartfield.e-sussex.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	2–3 May 2012
Inspection number	378887



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012



Introduction

Inspection team

Clive Dunn

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons taught by six teachers, and observed a small group session led by a teaching assistant. He held discussions with pupils, staff and members of the governing body. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of the school's records and policy documents, teachers' planning, pupils' work, and questionnaires returned by pupils and 68 parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is just above average. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than average. The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. Since the previous inspection, there have been considerable staffing changes, including at all leadership levels. The headteacher took up the post in April, just over two weeks before the inspection. Prior to this, the school was without a substantive headteacher for a year, but supported by a part-time interim headteacher.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is not yet good because the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are satisfactory. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Following the previous inspection, the school's performance dipped. Attainment declined in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. This pattern of slowing pupils' progress started to reverse during the last academic year. Acceleration in the pace of improvement from April 2011 has meant that the school has successfully eradicated underachievement and pupils are back on track.
- Although results dipped below floor standards in 2011, pupils' current and historic attainment is typically average. Not enough pupils attain the higher levels at the end of each key stage. Although satisfactory, pupils' progress in mathematics is accelerating more slowly than in literacy.
- Teaching is typically satisfactory. It does not always meet the needs of different groups of pupils closely enough to promote quicker progress. Teachers' marking is encouraging but is not always useful in advancing pupils' learning. Pupils know and use their next-step targets in writing and mathematics. They are not always familiar with the skills they need to develop in reading.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is positive and they are keen to learn. In lessons, disruption to learning for the whole class is uncommon. Teaching does not always fully engage all pupils, occasionally interrupting the flow of learning for a few.
- The trend of sustained improvement in achievement shows the school has the capacity to improve. High attendance figures, rising over several years, support pupils' accelerating progress effectively. Rigorous systems for the management

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

of performance and leadership of teaching have effectively eradicated previous inadequacies. Leaders at different levels have contributed well to improvements and have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. Not all are involved in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms first-hand.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and achievement at all key stages to good, with a particular focus on further accelerating improvements in mathematics, by:
 - customising teaching and tasks to meet the needs of all pupils more closely
 - ensuring marking frequently shows pupils how to improve their work and always gives pupils chance to respond
 - conducting lessons at a pace that enables pupils to make at least good progress
 - fully engaging all pupils and motivating them to work independently at a good pace
 - ensuring children in Early Years Foundation Stage are sufficiently challenged to make good gains in their learning when selecting their own activities.

- Raise attainment by increasing the proportion of pupils that reach the higher levels at each key stage, including through:
 - ensuring lessons consistently challenge more-able pupils
 - familiarising pupils with the advanced reading skills that this requires, such as inference and deduction
 - ensuring teachers and pupils clearly understand the reading skills they are aiming to develop in each group session.

- Strengthen the role of school leaders at different levels in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, to deepen their understanding of the impact of their actions to promote improvement.

Main report**Achievement of pupils**

From starting points that are usually broadly in line with expected levels, both boys and girls make satisfactory progress across the school. This means they reach broadly average levels at the end of each key stage in reading, writing and mathematics. Significant variation in the size of cohorts, some very small, means year-on-year comparisons of performance must be analysed with caution. Nonetheless, the decline in attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 was sufficient to result in the dip below floor standards in 2011. The standard of pupils' work this academic year indicates that the school is successfully closing the gap with all pupils

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

nationally. Current cohorts are working broadly in line with nationally expected levels. Although this improvement is yet to show in end of Key Stage 2 results, there has been a rise at Key Stage 1 for the last two years. However, not enough pupils reach the higher levels at the end of each key stage. Most parents and carers feel their children are making good progress at school, though some of their written comments reflected the inspection view that pupils' progress could be quicker.

Children work and play cooperatively in Early Years Foundation Stage. They use their phonics (letters and sounds) knowledge to make plausible attempts to spell new words, for example when writing shopping lists. When selecting their own activities, children do not always engage productively in a way that will promote more rapid gains in their learning. For example, they do not readily choose the plentiful writing opportunities across the environment.

Across the school, pupils' relationships with adults and their peers are good, so that by Year 6, pupils feel confident to listen carefully to ideas and challenge them, as seen in a Year 6 religious education lesson.

Pupils mostly enjoy coming to school but are not always convinced learning is as 'fun' as it could be. This is reflected in their often steady pace of work in lessons, and occasional lack of engagement in activities and tasks by a few pupils. Pupils are enthusiastic about their individual mathematics targets and motivated to use these to help them improve their skills. In reading, however, once pupils have learned to decode print, they are not familiar enough with comprehension skills that will help them advance to the higher levels. For example, how to 'read between the lines' or infer things from the text. That said, pupils have positive attitudes to reading and read with enthusiasm and clear enjoyment in varied whole-class, group or individual activities.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs display positive attitudes and achieve satisfactorily, in line with their peers. The school has rightly begun to track how much specific additional intervention for these and other pupils accelerates their progress. However, the systems have not been established long enough to analyse the impact of such support.

Quality of teaching

Teachers ensure lessons are clearly structured and well organised. They make effective use of questioning to promote pupils' thinking, as well as discussion partners and new technologies. Teachers' pace sometimes slows and this contributes to the occasional loss of focus for a few pupils. Activities meet the needs of all pupils adequately but often not closely enough to promote quicker progress, particularly in mathematics. For example, in one mathematics lesson, pupils responded positively to an investigation task that required them to use and apply their calculation skills. However, the starting point for the task was the same for all pupils, and consequently not all higher-ability pupils reached the more challenging part that required them to use brackets in their calculations. Whereas in a mathematics lesson

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

in Years 4 and 5, the teacher adjusted the lesson well for different groups, allowing pupils to self-assess when ready to move on. This enabled all to achieve well. Provision and use of additional resources and adult support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs enables them to achieve satisfactorily, in line with their peers.

Increasingly frequent and accurate assessment of pupils' capabilities and progress in order to determine appropriate next steps is supporting the drive to improve achievement. Leaders have rightly made this a priority. It has been particularly effective in accelerating progress in writing. Here, the tighter structure of accurate assessment, more detailed marking, and pupils checking and improving their own work against their next-step targets has paid off. Marking in mathematics is encouraging but less frequently shows pupils how to develop their skills. Similarly, in guided reading sessions, teachers do not always make clear what reading skills the activity is developing. In Years 2 and 3, pupils know their next steps more clearly, because they are written in straightforward language. Clear teaching against these during guided reading led to a purposeful and productive session.

The proportion of parents and carers returning the questionnaires was above average. The overwhelming majority felt their children were taught well. Despite this, a small proportion of parents and carers expressed ongoing concerns about the quality of teaching in their written comments. Inspectors and school leaders share the view that teaching is not good overall, and this is a priority for improvement.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

In lessons, pupils are responsive to teachers' expectations so lessons typically flow without major disruption. Teachers encourage positive learning behaviours, such as pupils using independent self-help strategies when stuck, rather than asking an adult immediately, but pupils do not use these consistently. When pupils are not fully engaged or sufficiently challenged, the pace of learning slows and evidence indicates this pattern of behaviour is typical.

Parents and carers are almost unanimous in their agreement that behaviour is good. Around the school, in the corridors, playground and during assembly pupils do behave well. This makes an important contribution to the calm, orderly atmosphere of the school. Pupils' views of behaviour are similarly positive, though one in five pupils believe that behaviour in lessons is only sometimes good. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying such as name-calling or physical bullying, but say it is extremely rare at school. Older pupils are familiar with issues relating to cyber-bullying and understand how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Pupils are confident that adults listen to them and deal effectively with any occasional problems. Break times are harmonious and pupils of different ages mix well.

Leadership and management

Following a dip in the school's performance, actions taken by leaders at different

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

levels have been effective in securing improvement. In the previous academic year, new English and mathematics leaders revised the curriculum and planning to make learning more structured and purposeful. Leaders introduced new systems for managing the performance of all staff members. Professional development aligns well with whole-school priorities, including additional training for leaders. Following the appointment of the interim headteacher, tighter governance arrangements led to more rigorous monitoring of the school's performance.

Collectively, school leaders, staff, governors and the previous interim headteacher have secured continuity in the drive for improvement. The new headteacher has wasted no time in making a purposeful start, supported by effective transition arrangements before taking up the post. She is quickly establishing an accurate and perceptive view of the school's effectiveness. The school's honest and accurate self-evaluation and frequent review of challenging plans and targets underpin the sustained improvement in pupils' achievement already seen and demonstrate the capacity to improve further. The governing body is providing leaders with effective support and challenge to raise standards.

Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements, and staff understand and follow established procedures to protect and promote the welfare of pupils. There is no evidence of discrimination of any kind. Since September 2011, staff have used more detailed and frequent tracking of pupils' progress effectively to identify potential underachievement and close any gaps that may emerge. The greatest acceleration in rates of progress has been in writing, an area for development identified in the previous inspection. Although plans are now in place, not all leaders have yet had opportunity to evaluate the quality of learning in their subjects first-hand, for example through observing lessons.

The school takes reasonable steps to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The headteacher and some parents and carers accurately identify the broader aspects of the curriculum, such as art, as areas for further development. Positive partnerships already developed beyond the school bring specialist teaching in physical education, music and French. The curriculum meets pupils' interests adequately. They highlight trips out and visitors into school as things that they particularly enjoy.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



4 May 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Mary the Virgin Church of England Primary School,
Hartfield TN7 4AA**

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave me when I came to visit your school recently. I really enjoyed meeting you and seeing how you are getting on. Thank you to all of those who spoke to me, read to me, or answered one of our questionnaires. You told me that you enjoy school and feel safe when you are there. I could see that by your high attendance. Some of you feel that learning could be more fun.

I have judged your school to be satisfactory. This means that it does some things well, but that there are other things it is working hard to make better. You make the progress expected of you to reach levels that children at your age usually do. This shows that teaching is satisfactory. You behave well around the school. Many of you behave well in lessons, though you do not always work as quickly as you could and sometimes your attention wanders, which slows down your learning.

Your school is improving and, to help make sure this continues, I have asked the school to do some important things.

- Make sure teaching helps you to achieve well, particularly in mathematics, by ensuring lessons really engage and motivate you.
- Help more of you to reach the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Provide opportunities for school leaders to observe how well you are getting on during lessons so they can make sure things keep improving.

You can all help by always trying to concentrate so that you get as much good work done as you can in every lesson.

Yours sincerely

Clive Dunn
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**