

St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Burton Latimer

Inspection report

Unique reference number	122015
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	380386
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2012
Lead inspector	Mike Capper

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Pykett
Headteacher	Tony Collins
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2010
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Mike Capper

Additional Inspector

Pamela Hemphill

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 15 lessons taught by eight teachers. Discussions were held with parents and carers at the start of the school day, and with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including teachers' planning, assessment information, safeguarding policies and samples of pupils' work. They analysed 78 questionnaires from parents and carers, 66 from pupils and 19 from members of staff.

Information about the school

Most pupils come to this average-sized primary school from the local community. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The vast majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are supported at 'school action plus' or have a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

For reasons beyond the school's control, there has been a relatively high turnover of teachers in some classes since the previous inspection in 2010, when the school came out of 'special measures'.

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. A robust focus by senior leaders on improving pupils' progress is beginning to pay dividends and the school is moving forward quickly. It is not yet good because there is not enough good teaching to ensure that achievement, especially in reading, and behaviour are consistently good in all year groups. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils' attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6, reflecting their satisfactory achievement. The best progress is in the Reception class, where children quickly acquire new skills, and in Year 6, where pupils benefit from working in small groups and are taught especially well. Across the school, progress is slowest for less-able pupils in reading, because they do not read regularly enough to adults and the reading skills taught in small groups outside lessons are not always reinforced sufficiently well at other times.
- There is some good teaching across the school, but too much is still no better than satisfactory. Teachers ensure good engagement in lessons because work is exciting and purposeful. Assessment procedures are very thorough, but teachers do not always use the resulting information well enough to provide the right level of challenge for all pupils.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. They feel safe, have positive attitudes towards learning and enthusiastically embrace responsibility. They behave well most of the time, but low-level disruption occasionally disturbs learning in lessons because adults do not apply behaviour policies consistently well.
- The management of performance and the leadership of teaching are satisfactory. The pace of change has been constrained by staff turnover, but initiatives since the previous inspection mean that pupils' attainment is rising. Leaders have a good track record of developing teaching, although their

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guidance has not yet ensured sustained improvement in every class.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move remaining satisfactory teaching to good by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use assessment information to provide the right level of challenge for all pupils and identify next steps in their learning
 - giving clear guidance to teachers about how to improve, and following this up rigorously so that improvements are sustained over time.
- Improve the progress of less-able pupils in reading by:
 - hearing all pupils read regularly, both in group reading sessions and individually to the class teacher
 - ensuring that reading skills that are taught in small groups outside lessons are reinforced by all teachers in everyday learning.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by ensuring that the school's behaviour policies are applied consistently by all staff.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

When pupils start school, the majority are working at the levels expected for their age. Pupils' attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6 and their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' attainment is rising, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where it is above average in the current year, and in Key Stage 1. This improving picture is now beginning to filter through to Key Stage 2. Parents and carers recognise these recent improvements and most are pleased with their children's progress, although some say that there is still variation across the school.

Pupils' progress in the lessons observed was never less than satisfactory, but it was inconsistent and not good often enough. In lessons in the Reception class, children make good progress and learn new skills quickly. For example, children rapidly improved their knowledge of life-cycles. They successfully wrote short sentences about frog-spawn, improving their vocabulary due to the timely intervention of the teacher, and improved their physical skills as they worked together to build a 'frog crossing point'.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils make the best progress in lessons when their work is pitched at the right levels for all groups. In a literacy lesson, there was good challenge as pupils learnt to recognise the key features of dialogue. Teaching promoted new skills well because pupils were given clear direction and were encouraged to explore their own ideas. In contrast, in a numeracy lesson, work on area and perimeter did not successfully meet differing needs and some pupils

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improved their skills too slowly. Similarly, in a literacy lesson, where pupils wrote instructions, there was not the right level of challenge for all pupils. Also the noise levels were too high, making it hard for pupils to concentrate.

Pupils' reading skills improve steadily and attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The teaching of phonics (learning letters and sounds) in the Reception class and Key Stage 1 successfully introduces key skills. For example, in a phonics lesson, Year 1 pupils confidently identified graphemes, extending their knowledge because the teacher gave them opportunities to use their skills in their writing.

There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls, but less-able pupils do less well than others in reading. Additional support outside lessons helps to close the gap for these pupils, but skills taught at these times are not always reinforced sufficiently well in follow-up lessons. This also slows the pace at which skills improve.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same satisfactory progress as other groups over time. They make good progress when supported by teaching assistants outside lessons because work is carefully focused on developing their basic literacy and numeracy skills, but they sometimes rely too much on adult help to complete work.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers are generally positive about the quality of teaching, although some feel that it is not good in every class. Pupils say that they enjoy lessons because 'Each day is different!' Inspectors found that teaching is improving quickly, but there are still inconsistencies in the quality across the school. Areas that have improved since the previous inspection include marking, which now gives helpful guidance to pupils about how to improve, and homework. Pupils are very positive about homework because 'It is not boring' and 'It lets us find out things for ourselves.'

In the Reception class, adults work together well and plan exciting activities that link subjects so that learning is always purposeful. When children are working individually or in small groups, adults are skilled at asking challenging questions so that learning moves on quickly. Thorough assessment gives a clear picture of children's good progress over time.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers' lesson planning appropriately supports the development of basic skills. Teachers give pupils good opportunities to develop important personal skills such as curiosity and imagination, and the value of not fearing failure. Most teachers are becoming adept at using their assessment information on pupils' learning to plan work that successfully meets differing needs. For example, good practice was seen in a science lesson, where more-able pupils started work on their task of designing an investigation, while the teacher spent

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more time talking to less-able pupils to ensure that they understood what they were doing. Where teaching is satisfactory, it is because the work that pupils are given is not pitched at the right level for all, so it is too hard for some and too easy for others. Although all teachers have detailed assessment information on their class, they do not always use this well enough to decide what to teach next. Reading skills are taught systematically but in some classes, pupils, especially the less-able, do not read regularly enough to teachers or other adults so that weaknesses can be identified, books changed more frequently and good attitudes towards reading promoted more readily.

The quality of teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is satisfactory. They do well when supported in small groups, but sometimes in lessons teachers take insufficient account of their widely varying starting points.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are polite and courteous, and their good enjoyment of school is reflected in above-average attendance. Pupils take pride in their work and support each other sensitively and play together happily. Their behaviour is often good in lessons and around the school, but there is occasional low-level disruption in lessons because not all staff apply the school's behaviour policies well enough so pupils are not clear about what is expected of them. Pupils with identified behavioural difficulties are given clear targets to help them improve, and this is successful in ensuring that they do not disturb the learning of others.

Parents and carers are generally positive about behaviour and raise very few concerns. In discussions pupils say that they like school, but some do not feel as safe at lunchtimes as they do during the rest of the day. Leaders have already rightly identified that this is because supervising adults do not always respond quickly enough to pupils' worries at lunchtimes. Additional training is already scheduled for the autumn term so that lunchtime supervisors are clearer about their role. Nonetheless, pupils are very clear that if they bring a worry to a teacher or teaching assistant it will be dealt with very quickly. Pupils say that there is little bullying and teachers 'sort out problems quickly.' They are very clear that bullying can take many forms. For example, they have been taught how to 'blog' safely and know what to do to avoid cyber-bullying.

Pupils keenly take responsibility. For example, road safety officers contribute well to pupils' understanding of how to stay safe and pupils showed good communication skills when taking an assembly during the inspection.

Leadership and management

Leaders' ongoing drive for improvement has led to many beneficial initiatives since the previous inspection. The pace of change has sometimes been slower than they would have liked due to changes in staff, but these issues have now been largely resolved. The school's capacity to improve is shown by successes such as the

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improved progress of pupils in all age groups and the way that provision, especially the outdoor area, has been improved in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Attainment is rising across the school because leaders use performance data well to identify and respond quickly to dips in pupils' progress.

The school's thorough self-evaluation systems ensure that all leaders, including subject leaders, are focusing on the right priorities. Focused additional training for teachers is ensuring that the proportion of good teaching is rising, although senior leaders know that too much is still only satisfactory, and that in some cases the feedback following monitoring has not been effective enough to ensure sustained improvement.

The school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination competently. Leaders are doing the right things to eliminate remaining unevenness in learning and progress between classes by providing further support to staff as required.

The governing body provides good challenge and has contributed well to the continued improvement in school performance over the last two years. It ensures that the school's safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements. Parents and carers know that the school takes well-considered action when concerns are raised.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, and successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The 'connected curriculum' which links subjects such as art, music and history together makes learning enjoyable and gives pupils good opportunities to work independently. Parents and carers are particularly positive about this, with their views summed up by comments such as 'It is a great curriculum which inspires the children' and 'The school makes learning fun.'

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.

11 July 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Burton Latimer, Kettering, NN15 5RL

Thank you for being so welcoming and giving us your thoughts in the questionnaires. You were very helpful and we enjoyed talking to you about your work, hearing some of you read and watching the Road Safety Officers take an assembly. We found that your school is providing a satisfactory education. This means that it does some things well, but there are also some areas for improvement.

Here are some of the things we liked most

- In the Reception class you make good progress. You are lucky to have such a lovely outdoor area to work in!
- You told us that you enjoy school, and feel safe most of the time. We saw lots of happy faces and you play together very happily.
- We saw lots of good behaviour but also some occasions when you called out or were too noisy in lessons.
- All adults in school are caring, and they give you suitable help if you have worries. They plan lots of interesting activities for you to take part in, and through the school council give you good opportunities to contribute to school development.

The school's leaders are doing the right things to make the school even better and are clear about what is not yet good enough. They know that there is not yet enough good teaching to ensure that your overall progress is good.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Support and guide teachers so that the work they set for all of you in lessons has just the right level of challenge – not too hard, but not too easy either.
- Hear you read more regularly and help pupils who read slowly to improve their reading skills in lessons.
- Make sure that your teachers only accept behaviour that is good or better. You can help by trying not being too noisy in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Mike Capper
Lead inspector

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