

# Dover, St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Laureston Place, Dover, Kent, CT16 1QX

**Inspection dates** 6–7 December 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Since the previous inspection many aspects of the school have improved.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points and achieve well, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and pupils who are learning English make similar progress to others.
- Standards in English and mathematics have risen and are improving further.
- Teaching and learning are good and some is outstanding. Good relationships between teachers and pupils help pupils learn well.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and caring. They have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school, as shown by their above-average attendance.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school, that they are not aware of any bullying, and that they are all treated fairly.
- The headteacher leads the school very effectively. She is well supported by governors. Regular and thorough checks are made on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Leaders quickly identify and support any teaching that does not meet their high expectations.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching.
- Not enough pupils make outstanding progress.
- Sometimes lessons do not provide enough demanding work for more able pupils and so, on occasion, they do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
- Work in mathematics lessons is not always pitched at the right level for pupils of all abilities to the same degree as it is in English.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, and especially their numeracy, skills in other subjects across the curriculum.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons or part lessons including some joint observations with the headteacher and the assistant headteacher. In addition, inspectors talked to pupils about their work and listened to some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, staff with key leadership responsibilities, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, records of pupils' progress and attainment and safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors took account of 10 responses to the on-line Parent View survey as well as 13 questionnaires returned by members of staff.

## Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Carol Vant

Additional Inspector

Jon Carter

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Mary's is an average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. The largest group is of Eastern European heritage.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is above average and many pupils are at the very early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. Their needs relate mainly to speech, language and communication difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding (the pupil premium) is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- A daily breakfast club is provided.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress through increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
  - ensuring work is demanding enough for those pupils who are more able
  - making sure that work in mathematics is pitched at the right level for pupils of all abilities.
- Increase the opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects across the curriculum.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start at the school with skills and knowledge that are usually below the expected levels for their age. They get a good start to school in their Reception year, achieve well and reach the expected goals for learning by the time they start in Year 1.
- Most pupils attain broadly average standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. Some pupils who join the school later than the usual times, and who are at the very early stages of learning English, do not always have enough time to reach the expected standards by the end of Year 2 or Year 6, although they make good progress from their starting points.
- Overall, most pupils achieve well. Gaps in attainment are narrowing. On occasion, tasks given to more able pupils are not hard enough to really make them think hard and make the progress of which they are capable.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar good progress to others because their needs are identified at an early stage and they are given effective support.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium benefit from a good range of support, carefully tailored to meet their academic and personal needs, including additional one-to-one or group teaching to ensure that they make equally good progress to others and are not excluded from any school activities.
- Pupils sometimes have too few opportunities to practise and develop literacy, and particularly numeracy, skills in other subjects.
- In the Year 1 phonic screening test (knowing letters and the sounds they make) in 2012, taken by the current Year 2 pupils, the proportion achieving the expected results was above that found nationally. Less able readers have a good grasp of phonics to help them read unfamiliar words. Reading is promoted well. Pupils enjoy reading and older, more able readers read with fluency and expression.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Some outstanding teaching was seen during the inspection. There are good relationships between pupils and teachers and this leads to pupils having good attitudes to learning and wanting to do well.
- Since September 2012, a systematic programme is used to teach English throughout the school. The structure, involving teaching pupils in groups based on their ability and not their age, enables tasks to be tailored well to meet individual needs. The competence with which teachers and teaching assistants teach this programme, due to the good training they have received, means that the impact has been very positive, very quickly.
- Notable features of the most successful lessons are the focus on developing speaking and listening skills through discussion, opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and cooperatively in teams, and a good, swift pace to learning. These features are beginning to have a positive impact on teaching and learning in other subjects as well as in English.
- In all subjects, in the best lessons, teachers constantly check how pupils are doing and question them skilfully to gauge their understanding and extend their thinking and learning. In these lessons work is well matched to pupils' ability. This was observed, for example, in Year 1 and Year 2 numeracy, where pupils made good progress in working out number bonds. On occasion, however, tasks are too general to meet the needs of the different abilities within the class in mathematics. In this, and other subjects, sometimes more able pupils are not required to think hard enough, often because they are asked to complete easier work first and do not have enough time to move on to the higher level work planned.
- Learning independently is a key feature of most lessons throughout the school. For example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers plan effectively. They take children's views and preferences into account and there is purposeful play to develop skills in all areas of learning. In

Year 5 and Year 6, pupils working on calculating percentages supported each other well to make good progress.

- Pupils generally know their targets for learning and teachers' marking and feedback give pupils information on how to improve their work.

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

- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in their improved attendance which is now above average.
- In the on-line questionnaire, parents agree that their children are happy, well behaved and feel safe in school.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and records show that this is typical of behaviour over time. On occasion, when a few pupils find it difficult to behave as well as others, teachers and other adults make sure that learning is not interrupted. Good behaviour and positive attitudes make a significant contribution to the better progress made by pupils since the previous inspection report.
- In discussions, pupils say they feel safe in school. They understand that there are different types of bullying, but say there is none in school. They are confident that should any issues arise, they can tell their teachers who will deal with things quickly and fairly.
- Pupils are polite and friendly to adults and each other. They are caring and considerate and get on well with each other. A group of pupils talking to an inspector said how they enjoyed helping others who were new to the country learn English. The pupils also said, 'We learn from them too, how to say things in different languages and what it's like to live in another country.'

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher is a highly effective and inspirational leader who has the confidence of parents and staff. Having worked successfully to secure improvements in behaviour and attendance, school leaders focus fully on pupils' progress and achievement. As a result, the school has moved forward securely. The staff team shares leaders' ambition and determination to provide the best for pupils, whatever their backgrounds or learning needs, and to ensure there is no discrimination. Training is well devised to develop the skills and expertise of staff to ensure that all pupils make good progress from their starting points, particularly those who arrive at the school at an early stage of speaking English and those with specific speech, language and communication difficulties.
- Leaders at all levels, including the governing body, understand the strengths of the school and what it needs to do next. Rigorous checks on the progress pupils make ensure that provision is constantly reviewed and adapted to meet individual needs.
- There are high expectations for the quality of teaching. The school's lesson observations check the quality of teaching and that appropriate support and guidance for pupils are provided. Targets for improvement are revisited in follow-up observations. All teachers know they are accountable for pupils' progress, and decisions on pay and salary progression are closely linked to how well teachers improve the progress of pupils in their class.
- Some subject leader and key stage leadership roles are relatively new. Leaders provide good support and guidance to colleagues to improve provision and the school has correctly identified the need to strengthen their role in raising achievement.
- The close links with the church, and the school's ethos of including all pupils and valuing their beliefs, cultures and backgrounds to make sure there are equal opportunities for all, ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the day-to-day life of the school.
- The subjects taught give appropriate emphasis to learning basic skills. There are some good

opportunities for pupils to use their reading and writing skills in different subjects, but fewer opportunities to do the same with their mathematical skills. Visitors to the school and visits, as well as a good and interesting range of clubs, help to enrich learning for pupils and broaden their experiences. The breakfast club provides a good start to the day for pupils who participate.

- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and the systems and procedures are well known and implemented by all staff.
- The local authority has supported the school well and worked with leaders to secure improved teaching.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body knows the school well and is fully committed to sustaining the improvement in pupils' achievement. Governors receive regular training to develop their roles. They are involved in checking the school's work and understand the data that show how well the school is doing compared to similar schools. Governors work closely with staff to set priorities for the future. Regular, paired governor visits help provide support for school leaders and hold them to account for pupils' achievement. Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching. They check teachers' performance and ensure that the salary structure is closely linked to pupils' progress. The governing body agrees how the pupil premium funding is to be spent and monitors the impact of this spending. The new systematic and structured literacy programme, for example, which started in September 2012, was a significant investment to benefit all pupils and particularly those supported by the pupil premium.
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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118748
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	401783

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	266
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Heron
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen D'cruz
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13–14 May 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01304 206887
<b>Fax number</b>	01304 205152
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@st-marys-dover.kent.sch.uk



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