

St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Stocks Lane, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S75 2DF

Inspection dates 19–20 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Outstanding teaching enables pupils to make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils use these skills exceptionally well in other subjects, for example history.
- Children join the Reception class with skills that are broadly typical for their age and leave Year 6 having reached high standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The speaking skills of a few pupils of all ages, mainly boys, are not as advanced as their reading and writing skills. This is because they are not always encouraged to develop these skills to the same extent.
- Teaching is outstanding because staff make very close checks on pupils' learning and match the work very precisely to the needs of every pupil. Teaching assistants make a very strong contribution to the learning of pupils of all abilities.
- Pupils are exceptionally keen to learn. Their behaviour in lessons is excellent. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school.
- St Mary's Academy Trust, the local governing body and the school's senior leaders have very high expectations of staff and pupils. Staff work together very well and this has been a key factor in securing outstanding teaching and the pupils' outstanding progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons taught by nine teachers and visited other activities for shorter periods of time. Two lessons were observed jointly with the acting headteacher. The inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils and staff, a representative and the Chair of the local Governing Body, and the Executive Principal and the Chair of St Mary's Academy Trust.
- The inspectors took account of 22 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also spoke with a number of parents, read letters sent in by parents and looked at the result of the school's own survey of parents' views.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at work in pupils' books. They looked at the school's information about pupils' progress, documents relating to safeguarding, the school's analysis of how well it is doing and its plans for further development.

Inspection team

Liz Godman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynne Davies

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is of a similar size to other primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and the children of military personnel) is below average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- St Mary's Church of England Primary School converted to become an academy school on 1 February 2012. When its predecessor school, St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The Executive Principal of St Mary's Academy Trust and the staff of the school, which is a National Support School, provide support to two other primary schools: All Saints Darfield, which belongs to the Academy Trust, and Pipers Grove Primary School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the speaking skills of all pupils by:
 - ensuring that all pupils, particularly boys, talk about their learning during different activities and participate fully in class discussions
 - consistently giving all pupils the opportunities to give their ideas and views on different aspects of school life.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils' outstanding achievement is reflected in the very rapid progress they make through the school and the high standards they reach by the end of Year 6.
- Children join the Reception class with skills that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress in all the areas of learning and most enter Year 1 with skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics which are above those typical for their age. These high standards ensure that pupils are very well prepared for secondary school.
- Children show sustained interest in the varied activities provided in the Reception class and many talk enthusiastically about their paintings and their learning in the 'theatre' or 'garden centre'. However, some, particularly boys, are less talkative during their play.
- Pupils' progress accelerates in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, their reading, writing and mathematical skills are significantly above average.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are confident readers. They use their knowledge of letters and sounds to read unfamiliar words, for example in identifying the names and features of three-dimensional shapes or in solving mathematical problems in lessons.
- Outstanding progress continues in Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6, pupils have excellent skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Many are working at levels well above those expected for their age in both English and mathematics.
- Just occasionally, particularly for boys, pupils' speaking skills are less well developed. This is because there are sometimes fewer opportunities for the boys to talk about their learning and to answer questions or give extended answers in lessons.
- Pupils in Year 6 read widely and fluently. Most show a high level of understanding of the books they are reading. They use these skills well in other subjects. In lessons observed, pupils in Year 3 used their historical knowledge to write fluently about the Ancient Egyptians. Those in Year 5 drew on earlier research from books and the internet to develop accurate written comparisons of life in Ancient Athens and Sparta.
- Pupils who have special educational needs, and those who are more-able, make outstanding progress. Teachers and teaching assistants are very skilled at ensuring all pupils experience success.
- The small number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals also make outstanding progress as a result of the school's careful checks and the additional help they receive when necessary. In 2012, at the end of Year 6, the very small number of these pupils made better than expected progress from their starting points, but did not quite reach the same very high standards as other pupils in the school.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Pupils' outstanding achievement is the result of outstanding teaching. Lessons are planned in detail so that work is matched precisely to needs and challenges all pupils. Pupils receive very clear guidance about how to succeed and routines are very well established for them to check their work.
- In addition, teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly so that pupils know exactly how to improve it. Teachers also ensure that pupils have time to correct their work.
- There are several adults in many classrooms but their different roles are very clear and this ensures that pupils of all abilities have time with an adult to accelerate their learning. However, teachers also ensure that pupils have time to work by themselves or in a group, so that they do not become over-dependent on adult help. As a result, the teaching and support for pupils with special educational needs and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium are outstanding. This secures their excellent progress.

- During lessons, careful checks are made on pupils' progress. Information from this is used to plan the next steps in learning and to decide which pupils will attend the daily 'analysis groups'. These provide additional help for any pupils who have found aspects of the lesson difficult and enable them to catch up.
- Reading is taught exceptionally well. Pupils have regular opportunities to read aloud with an adult and silently by themselves. They are challenged to interpret increasingly difficult texts as they move through the school.
- Teachers make learning very interesting. This is, for example, through the use of information and communication technology so that pupils can find things out for themselves.
- Pupils in Year 2 undertook practical tasks in measuring 'witch's potions' and showed a very good understanding of weight and capacity because the lesson captured their interest. Similarly, teachers ensure that lessons are highly relevant to the pupils' ages and interests. For example, Year 6 considered the benefits and disadvantages of social networking websites as they developed persuasive writing in an English lesson. This also developed their excellent understanding of cyber-bullying and of how to stay safe when using the internet.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are very proud of their school; they take exceptional pride in their work and in their achievements. Behaviour in lessons is excellent and pupils are very eager to learn. They listen carefully when adults explain their work and also work very well by themselves.
- Pupils' enthusiasm for school helps to ensure their above average attendance.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and almost all of their parents who completed the questionnaire agree that their children feel safe in school.
- Older pupils say that bullying is extremely rare. They have an excellent understanding of the different forms of bullying, for example referring to cyber-bullying or to bullying people because they are different in size or skin colour. Pupils are also clear about where to go for help should any bullying occur.
- Pupils' behaviour in the corridors, in assembly and in the dining room is exemplary. Behaviour on the playground is also very good and pupils play safely, although sometimes they are a little excited.
- Some pupils have very clear ideas about what could be improved further, for example, the playground. Although there is an active school council, there are missed opportunities for all pupils to develop their speaking skills by giving their ideas and views on different aspects of school life.
- Older pupils enjoy helping the younger ones and take great care to ensure they are happy and safe.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- St Mary's Academy Trust, the local governing body and the school's senior leaders have very high expectations of staff and pupils. This ensures that staff work together very well. It has also been a key factor in securing outstanding teaching and the pupils' outstanding progress.
- Senior leaders have a thorough and accurate view of the quality of teaching and use this information very well to make sure that teaching is at least good and most is outstanding.
- Similarly, detailed and regular checks are made on pupils' progress and additional help is provided swiftly where needed in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Staff training is directly related to the role and experience of individual members of staff. The close links with the other primary schools involved with St Mary's Academy Trust provide excellent opportunities for staff to develop and use their skills in a wider context.
- The management of the performance of all staff is very rigorous. The quality of teaching and the rate of pupils' progress are used to decide whether teachers should be paid more. All staff have

clearly defined responsibilities and individual plans for implementing these. Senior leaders check progress with the plans and on how they link to the school's overall priorities for further development.

- Staff are vigilant in ensuring that pupils are safe and all safeguarding requirements are met.
- Almost all parents who expressed a view are very happy with the school's work and with the progress their children are making.
- The pupil premium has been used very well to provide high levels of additional help in classrooms. This ensures the outstanding progress of all pupils, including those known to be eligible for the pupil premium and those with special educational needs.
- The school also makes excellent use of its resources to provide a rich and interesting curriculum as well as giving pupils an exceptional grounding in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, all pupils participate in varied sporting activities, visits and residential experiences, and all learn to play a musical instrument.
- The curriculum teaches pupils to understand right and wrong, to get along with other people and to understand the similarities and differences of life in different cultures.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The roles of the different layers of governance are very clearly defined so that everyone knows precisely what is expected of them. The Executive Principal and the Chair of the Academy Trust have an in-depth understanding of the quality of the school's work and set the very high expectations of all the directors, members of the local governing body, staff and pupils. The local governing body has a detailed knowledge of pupils' attainment and progress, the quality of teaching and the links between teachers' performance and pay. This has been a key factor in developing the outstanding quality of teaching and in ensuring that all resources, including the pupil premium, are used to best effect to secure pupils' outstanding progress.

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	137870
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	403718

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patrick Duckworth
Headteacher	Lee Spencer
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01226 206422
Fax number	01226 206490
Email address	l.spencer@barnsley.org

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