

# St Mary's CofE Primary School

Fownhope, Hereford, HR1 4PG

**Inspection dates** 25–26 April 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The work of the headteacher, well supported by a strong staff team and governing body, has led to considerable improvements since the school's last inspection.
- The quality of teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers promote learning well and demonstrate good subject knowledge, thanks to thorough and regular checks on the quality of teaching, followed up by effective staff training.
- Pupils of all abilities achieve well and standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly in line with national averages in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are exemplary and this contributes strongly to the good learning in most lessons. Their attendance is above average.
- Provision in the Reception class is good and children make a strong start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children are confident, inquisitive about the world around them and respond well to the good range of stimulating activities provided.
- Pupils are treated with respect and as individuals in an atmosphere of care and support. As a result, they are considerate and take very good care of each other and are welcoming and courteous to visitors.
- Pupils enjoy a variety of exciting additional activities throughout the school year, including visits, visitors and residential stays.
- The school accurately evaluates how well it is doing and what needs to be done next.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Occasionally, the pace of learning in lessons slows after a brisk start, and pupils are not encouraged enough to learn independently without direction from adults.
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics is not yet as high as it is in reading and writing.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also made a number of shorter visits to classrooms.
- Meetings and discussions were held with governors, members of staff, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils. The inspector also heard a number of pupils read.
- The inspection took into account the 44 responses to the online questionnaire for parents and carers (Parent View) and the outcomes from the school's consultations with parents.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupil mobility, pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Clive Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most other primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils eligible for free school meals and other specific groups) is below the national average.
- An above average proportion of pupils join the school at other than the normal time, mid-year and mid-key stage. More than half of the 2012 Year 6 cohort of 15 pupils joined the school during Key Stage 2, for example.
- Pupils are organised in single year group classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1, 2 and 3 and in mixed-aged classes of Years 4 and 5, and Years 5 and 6.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is below the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average, and particularly high in some year groups.
- No pupil attends off-site alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Raise the overall quality and consistency of teaching to outstanding by ensuring that:
  - all learning in lessons proceeds at a brisk pace throughout
  - pupils are provided with more opportunities to develop their independent learning skills.
- Improve pupils' mental calculation skills in mathematics by ensuring that pupils are provided with more opportunities to employ and practise these skills in other subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The small cohorts, the high number of pupils joining the school mid-key stage, and the relatively high proportion of pupils with significant special educational needs in some years make comparisons between key stages and year groups less meaningful than in larger schools. However, school data demonstrates clearly that all pupils, including those entitled to free school meals, children from service families and those who have special educational needs make at least the expected progress in their time in school.
- Inspection findings confirm that good teaching leads to pupils making good progress throughout the school. This progress is reflected in the good quality of learning in most lessons observed and is confirmed by the work in pupils' books.
- Children's experiences and skills when they enter the school are generally below those typically found for this age group. They get off to a good start and make good progress in all areas of their learning. They concentrate well and are proud of their achievement.
- Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 quickly learn the sounds that letters make (phonics) to support their reading and writing, as well as the mathematical skills they need to complete simple calculations.
- Pupils make particularly good progress in developing their reading skills. Younger pupils are taught to read by linking letters to the sounds they make. They generally tackle new and unfamiliar words well and confidently because they develop a good understanding of letters and their sounds. The teaching of reading, through daily phonics lessons and guided reading activities, continues through all age groups. As a result, pupils throughout the school read confidently.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to build on the good achievements in the lower school and, by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, although significant progress has been made in mathematics, pupils' mental mathematical skills remain a relative weakness. Pupils do not get enough regular opportunities to apply their mathematics skills in other subjects.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Good support is provided by class teachers, teaching assistants and outside agencies. This ensures that work is set at the right level for them, enabling them to make small but progressive steps in their learning.
- Pupils who join the school partway through their primary education and those eligible for the pupil and service children premiums make good progress. There is no gap between their progress and that of other pupils in the school. School data indicate that eligible pupils attain similar standards in English and mathematics to those of other pupils and attain broadly average standards. Any barriers to learning are quickly identified and the funding is used well by the school to ensure that pupils joining the school mid-way through their primary education experience a smooth transition into the new school environment and to provide very carefully matched additional support through frequent one-to-one and small-group work. A proportion of the money allocated is used by the school to ensure that these pupils can join in any extra activities provided for other pupils.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Good teaching enables pupils of all backgrounds and abilities to learn successfully during their time in school. Teachers plan their lessons well, sharing with pupils what is to be learned and, in the best cases, how they can judge successful learning for themselves.
- Good use is made of resources, including information and communication technology (ICT), to motivate pupils and enhance their learning. Frequent marking of pupils' work typically gives them guidance about how well they have met the learning objective and how they can further improve their work.
- In one outstanding Years 4 and 5 numeracy lesson, focusing on solving word problems involving negative numbers, the teacher set a good pace to the learning which was maintained throughout the lesson. The work was demanding for pupils of all abilities and there were high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Very good use was made of questioning to gauge and guide pupils' understanding. This encouraged pupils to discuss their ideas and recall their experiences, and provided a good basis for their work.
- In most lessons, learning moves along at a good pace but, in a small minority of lessons, the pace of learning slows after a good start. Similarly, in a few lessons, teaching directs pupils' learning too much and pupils are given little opportunity to develop their independent learning skills.
- Teachers' strategies to manage pupils' behaviour are very effective, with the result that lessons are calm and purposeful. Pupils concentrate on their work and work hard without the need for constant adult intervention.
- Pupils are supported by a strong and well-deployed team of teaching assistants. They provide good support for individuals and groups, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium and service children premium.
- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is checked and tracked rigorously as they move through the school. The headteacher meets each class teacher termly in order to evaluate and discuss the information about progress and attainment gained, and to set targets for further improvement. These meetings ensure that each teacher has a very clear understanding of how well the pupils in their charge are doing and the action they need to take in order to support them in reaching their improvement targets.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- The school is a calm, friendly and very orderly place in which to learn. Behaviour is outstanding in classes, around the school and in the playground areas. Pupils move around the school calmly and quietly. Relationships between pupils and adults are extremely positive. Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary and this is a major factor in the good progress they make in lessons. Pupils arriving mid-key stage, particularly those from service families, respond well to the excellent pastoral support provided to enable them to settle into school as quickly as possible. Pupils respond very well to the many opportunities planned for them to discuss their ideas with other pupils, either with a partner or in small groups.

- Pupils report that the school has an effective system of rewards and sanctions, which ensures that any unsatisfactory behaviour is dealt with effectively and promptly. Pupils who find behaving well more difficult are sensitively managed and skilfully supported so that, typically, their behaviour improves significantly.
- Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and they are enthusiastic about their education. This is reflected in their consistently high levels of attendance. Their punctuality in the mornings is extremely good.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying, including any that might be encountered through internet sites. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and say that they feel very safe in school. They say they are confident that any issues they raise will be dealt with promptly. Pupils understand the need to healthy lifestyles and exercise. Through the school council, they demonstrate their pride in the school community and take their responsibilities very seriously.
- Pupils respond extremely well to the strong moral and social guidance they receive. They develop very positive attitudes to life and learning through the teaching of common values and expectations through assemblies, and in personal and social education lessons. They have a very clear sense of what is right and wrong.

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

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and her high expectations are a significant factor in the good improvement made since the previous inspection, particularly in the rigour of systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. As a result of these improvements, all aspects of the school are now good or better and school self-evaluation has correctly identified appropriate areas for further development.
- Staff are well motivated and demonstrate a shared sense of responsibility and commitment to the school's continued improvement. They work very effectively together and regularly take advantage of training to enhance their work. They are aware of their accountability for the progress their pupils make and understand how this is linked to salary progression.
- The school is constantly alert to any variation in achievement and is proactive in devising initiatives to overcome any weaknesses. Fully supported and monitored by the governing body, the school makes effective use of the money derived from the pupil premium and service children premium to support frequent small group and one-to-one work. This helps eligible pupils to achieve as well as other pupils.
- The school provides outstanding pastoral care for its pupils. The small size of the school ensures that families and pupils are known very well by staff. The school's very positive relationships with the great majority of parents and carers and its very good links with a range of partners, such as the behaviour support team, speech therapy services and family support services, contribute significantly to improvements in pupils' wellbeing and achievement.
- Staff ensure that pupils benefit from a good balance of interesting and exciting activities. The recent strong focus on supporting literacy and mathematics across all subjects, tied in with imaginative links developed between different subjects, has had a positive effect on pupils' progress, enthusiasm and ability to learn and work on their own.
- Strong links with local schools help to overcome the potential isolation of a small school. These

links enable staff to share their expertise, and ensure that pupils gain wider experiences and broaden their horizons.

- Local authority support has been helpful to the school in assisting staff in checking that they are accurate in their measurement of standards and in reviewing the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body provides strong support and challenge for leaders and managers in order to ensure that the school continues to improve and move forward. It checks that safeguarding systems are secure and that they meet all current regulatory requirements. The governing body has been effective in overseeing the arrangements for relating teachers' pay to performance. It plays a fully active role in the school's self-evaluation, monitoring and improvement planning processes. Governors gather, check and discuss a wide range of reports about the school as well as visiting regularly to see for themselves how the school is operating and being led. They understand the data on how well pupils do, and the comparative performance of the school in relation to similar schools. The governing body knows from first-hand evidence what is happening in the school and is aware that provision is good.

## 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>	116880
<b>Local authority</b>	Herefordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	413171

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>	132
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jaine Yule
<b>Headteacher</b>	Allyson Taylor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 April 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01432 860474
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