

St Mary's CofE Primary School

Shaw Lane, Albrighton, Wolverhampton, WV7 3DS

Inspection dates 27–28 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- The large majority of pupils, including the most able, make good progress in reading and writing by the time they leave, and the proportion of pupils who make better than expected progress is continuing to increase.
- Teaching is good. Teachers' marking gives pupils clear feedback on their work so that pupils know how to improve it.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and work hard. Their attitudes to their learning are good. They concentrate well in lessons and behave well.
- The headteacher has brought about excellent improvements in teaching and learning.
- Governors check the work of the school carefully and hold it to account for the achievement of all its pupils.
- The pupil premium funding is used to support those who are eligible, and this is successfully closing gaps in achievement.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and know how to get help if they need it.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Phonics (the match of letters and sounds) are not always being taught well enough to develop pupils' early writing sufficiently.
- Teachers do not assess pupils' learning precisely enough to set work at the right level to challenge pupils and move them forward in their learning, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils do not have enough understanding of the many different ways of life that exist in modern Britain.
- Leaders, apart from the headteacher and deputy headteacher, are not yet leading their areas with enough urgency.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons. The headteacher joined two of the observations and the deputy headteacher joined one.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special needs coordinator, the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator, pupils, a group of governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work and listened to them read.
- They examined documents in school, including those relating to safeguarding pupils, the record of how leaders measure their success and plan for improvement, and records of the progress made by pupils.
- Inspectors talked to parents at the beginning of the day and took account of the 51 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also analysed the 20 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Lynne Bradbury, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jonathan Moore

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St. Mary's is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportions from minority ethnic groups and those whose first language is not English is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is lower than average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible to support from the pupil premium is below average. This funding is allocated by the government to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching which is outstanding so that all pupils are able to make rapid progress by:
 - improving the teaching of phonics and early writing skills
 - improving teachers' questioning skills and assessment so that they know when to move pupils forward in their learning and understand how to challenge them appropriately, particularly in mathematics.
- Increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of the many different cultures within Britain.
- Develop the leadership skills of staff so that they can manage their areas of responsibility more effectively.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start in the Reception class with skills and abilities which are generally in line with those typical for their age group in all areas of learning. They make good progress and leave the class ready for the expectations of the National Curriculum.
- Children's early writing development is delayed a little because their understanding of phonics does not progress rapidly enough. However, when they join Key Stage 1, their reading quickly picks up; pupils achieved levels broadly in line with expectations in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2013.
- Pupils develop a love of reading from Year 1 onwards and their reading is of a high standard across the school. Their progress in reading is above what is expected at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils read with great confidence and fluency to inspectors and talked excitedly about a wide range of books and authors.
- Writing and mathematics skills also develop rapidly in Years 1 and 2, and this has improved since the last inspection. Pupils consequently attain levels a little above those seen nationally in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2013, pupils' achievement was above the national average in reading, but broadly in line in mathematics and below in writing. However, evidence in pupils' books indicates that achievement in writing is improving rapidly. Attainment is also rising in mathematics, though to a lesser extent. More-able pupils make consistently good progress in all subjects.
- The number of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding leaving Year 6 in 2013 was too small to make comments about their achievement without the risk that individuals could be identified. Across the school, these pupils are well supported and progress at the same rate as their classmates in both English and mathematics. The funding is used to provide one-to-one and small-group tuition, as well as access to out-of-school activities.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the good support they receive.

The quality of teaching is good

- Evidence from pupils' books and the information held by the school on pupils' achievement show that teaching over time has been good. Teaching has improved rapidly because of the excellent attention given to it by the headteacher and, more recently, the governors.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is generally good in most of the areas of learning taught in this phase. However, the links between childrens' use of phonics and their early writing is not yet fully developed and so some children do not make rapid progress at this stage in this area of learning.
- All staff model respect and build good relationships with their pupils. They organise classrooms and equipment well and use well thought-out rewards and sanctions to encourage good behaviour and attitudes.

- The most effective teaching is motivating and well planned. Teachers ensure that pupils know precisely what they have to do next and check their progress very carefully. The projects teachers choose for pupils to explore hold pupils' interest well, and pupils are very enthusiastic about their work, particularly on the rain forests and the forest school. Their writing on these topics is particularly good. Similarly, when faced with challenging problems in mathematics, pupils respond very purposefully. This good level of challenge is not, however, a consistent feature of teaching across the school.
- The teaching of reading is particularly effective. Teachers develop pupils' love of reading by sharing exciting books which are of particular interest to their pupils. The pupils respond positively, always eager to talk about what they are reading and to share their insights with others.
- Pupils are given good guidance on how to improve their work because marking is generally thorough and indicates next steps to learning. This has improved greatly since the last inspection. Teachers increasingly ensure that pupils respond to these comments to improve their work.
- Teaching assistants generally make an important contribution to pupils' learning, especially when they work with small groups of pupils or individuals with particular needs.
- Teachers do not always take enough account of what pupils already know when planning new learning, or question pupils well enough to determine when they should move their learning forward, particularly in mathematics. Some teachers do not check that pupils fully understand what they are learning, and the level of challenge in some activities, particularly in mathematics, is not always sufficient.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their positive attitudes help them to make good progress. They are keen and enthusiastic about their learning, and they listen and concentrate well in lessons. They display good manners. Relationships are good, and pupils trust and like the staff in school.
- Records in school show that behaviour over time has improved, and those with particular difficulties in this area are supported well by staff so that they make good progress. Parents, pupils and staff generally agree that behaviour is good, and they all appreciate the systems in place to reward good behaviour.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and talk excitedly about the wide range of learning opportunities they are given.
- The school's work to ensure pupils are safe and secure is good. Safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements.
- Pupils understand risk, know how to keep themselves safe, and know who to go to if they need help. During the inspection, there was an interesting assembly about staying safe when using computers, and the pupils were able to discuss this in a very mature manner afterwards.
- Pupils understand the different forms of bullying and say that it rarely happens in school. If it does, then staff deal with it quickly and effectively.

- Attendance is in line with the national average. A range of successful measures have been put into place to improve attendance, particularly to support those pupils who have had low attendance in the past.

The leadership and management are good

- The outstanding work of the headteacher has brought rapid improvement in the school. Her determination and resilience when confronting low levels of progress in the past has united staff, parents, pupils and governors, and all are committed to making the changes necessary to move the school forward.
- Senior leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. They check the work of the school regularly.
- English and mathematics are led well because the headteacher and deputy headteacher have taken responsibility for these as priority areas. Other members of staff have not yet developed fully as leaders and do not always possess the skills and experience needed to develop their subjects successfully.
- Targets for staff development and appraisal are ambitious and pay decisions are based on teachers' success in raising pupils' achievement. A very extensive staff training programme has been developed that is specifically designed to help teachers address weaker aspects of pupils' performance in tests and assessments.
- The headteacher has set up opportunities for staff to work and develop in partnership with other schools. This has brought increased challenge and support to their work. It has also helped staff to be more accurate in their understanding of the levels achieved by their pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is promoted well across the subjects taught and the experiences offered. Pupils' understanding of other cultures in Britain is not as fully developed as it should be.
- The governors and headteacher have established good relationships with parents. Those who contacted inspectors spoke highly of the support their children get from the school. They appreciate the information they receive about how their children are doing. They particularly appreciate the work of the headteacher in making key changes to improve the school.
- Pupils enjoy the wide range of interesting subjects and topics they are given. Skills in English and mathematics are reinforced on occasions through these subjects, but not extensively. The extra sports funding has been used to employ specialist sports coaches who are helping to raise standards and expectations in physical education. A wide range of out-of-school sport and other activities is offered to all pupils. The school ensures that pupils of all abilities enjoy equal opportunities to succeed.
- The local authority has provided good-quality support for the school's development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors share the headteacher's high ambitions for the school and its pupils. They have developed systems along with the headteacher to check and measure the school's success. Governors have undertaken extensive training and development, and they take an active and critical interest in every aspect of the school. While the headteacher provides governors with

detailed reports and information, they also check progress for themselves. Governors ask very searching questions. They use information about pupil progress to measure improvement and to judge the work of the staff through appraisal. They accurately identify the strengths and priority areas for development and use these in planning the next steps for the school and the use of finance. Finances are well managed and governors carefully measure the impact of the pupil premium funding.

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	123458
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	431132

This inspection 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	Sally Belsham
Headteacher	Amanda Skidmore
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2012
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