

Farnsfield St Michael's Church of England Primary (Voluntary Aided) School

Branston Avenue, Farnsfield, NG22 8JZ

Inspection dates 5–6 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- St Michael's is a friendly and happy school where learning and good behaviour are valued, and pupils, whatever their needs or abilities, are made to feel welcome.
- The headteacher, ably supported by all other leaders, has improved teaching and achievement in all year groups, with particularly strong gains this year, after a decline following the previous inspection.
- Children in the Reception classes make a good start to their education.
- All pupils, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium make good progress.
- Teaching assistants and other adults make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- Teachers make lessons interesting and usually set challenging tasks that interest pupils and move their learning on quickly.
- Behaviour is good because relationships are positive and pupils respond well to the caring atmosphere of the school
- The curriculum offers a wide range of exciting experiences. It makes a strong contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Attendance is above average and pupils say they enjoy coming to school and feel safe.
- The governors carry out their responsibilities effectively. They support and challenge school leaders and hold them to account for the school's performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The improved progress in writing is not as great as in reading and mathematics.
- Marking does not always make clear what pupils have done well and what they need to do to further improve their work.
- Occasionally, pupils are given work which is either too easy or too hard for them.
- Pupils' presentation of work is sometimes poor and handwriting is untidy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons or parts of lessons, attended assembly and visited the breakfast club. Sometimes they were accompanied by the headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their views of the school, listened to pupils read in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 5, looked at work in pupils' books and observed them at play and lunch breaks.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and with staff including senior leaders. A telephone call was made to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the view of parents contained in the 62 online responses to the Parent View questionnaire. In addition, inspectors looked at the responses to the questionnaire distributed to parents by the school and met informally with parents at the start of the school day. A very small number of letters received from parents were also reviewed.
- The views of teaching and non-teaching staff, expressed in the 19 responses to their questionnaire, were considered.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including: the school development plan; the school's own assessment data and analysis of its strengths and weaknesses; policies and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding; information on pupils' progress and attainment, the performance of teachers and the work of the governing body.
- The pupils in Year 6 were away on a residential visit to Scarborough throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Valerie Palmer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

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Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is, also, below average.
- The number of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. This is extra funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- The governing body provides a daily breakfast and after-school club.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by ensuring:
 - work is matched to pupils abilities so that it is neither too easy or too hard
 - all teachers have higher expectations for the presentation of pupils' work and their handwriting.
- Improve progress in writing by improving the consistency in the quality of marking so that pupils have a clear understanding of what they are doing well and what they need to do to further improve.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement has gone up significantly in the last two years, following a decline previously. This was initially apparent in pupils' better standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2012 and 2013. Standards also rose to some extent at the end of Key Stage 2, but the full impact of better teaching is only seen in the much better progress that pupils have made during the current year. This is confirmed by work in pupils' books, the school's detailed tracking of attainment, and by the learning seen during the inspection.
- Progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics fell sharply, at the end of Key Stage 1, in 2011, but have steadily improved over the last two years. Progress is good and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, at the end of Year 2 in 2013, was broadly average.
- Children start Reception with skills and knowledge which are generally typical for their age. They get off to a good start because teachers successfully use a variety of practical, creative and physical activities to develop reading, writing and number skills while encouraging personal and social development. Activities are well planned and take into account children's interests and needs, which boosts their progress and involvement. Last year, most children left Reception with levels of achievement above those expected nationally, having made good progress. Good achievement continues this year and children are well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- Early reading skills continue to improve, as a result of in-depth training for all staff in the delivery of phonics (linking letters and sounds). The proportion of pupils achieving the required standard in the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 increased in 2013 and was higher than the national average. Younger pupils, when reading to inspectors, used their knowledge of phonics to read unfamiliar words and older pupils were happy to discuss story settings and characters and why they enjoyed named authors and chose specific books.
- The school's data on achievement confirm that pupils are making good progress throughout Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment has been on a steady upward trend, in all subjects, over the last two years. In 2013, more pupils achieved the higher levels, than national, in mathematics. The proportion of pupils on track, currently, to achieve the higher levels in writing, in Year 2, has increased.
- Writing skills are encouraged effectively from an early age. Pupils in Year 2 were successfully using paragraphs, adjectives and adverbs having set their own success criteria at the beginning of the lesson. In 2013, pupils in Year 6 were a term and a half ahead of their peers nationally in writing and a small number of pupils reached very high standards. However, boys' attainment in writing was four terms behind that of girls. School data show that this gap has closed markedly, this year, with boys being a term behind the girls, a smaller gap than that found nationally. Generally, however, progress in writing, although improving, is not as strong as in other subjects throughout the school.
- Progress is good in all year groups in mathematics. In 2013, pupils in Year 6 were a term ahead of their peers nationally and a small number of pupils reached a Level 6, which is a standard much higher than normally expected in a primary school. The school's data, for the current Year 6, indicate that they have made better progress across Key Stage 2 than is found nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because tasks and learning methods are adapted to their individual needs. They receive good support in

class from teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils who speak English as an additional language access the full curriculum and make good or better progress.

- The numbers of pupils supported through the pupil premium within the school are small. The funding has had a positive impact on improving their achievement, which is growing closer to that of their peers. In Year 6, in 2013, pupils were on average a term behind their peers in reading and writing and five terms behind in mathematics. The school's own information, for all current year groups, shows these gaps are rapidly closing and eligible pupils make similar progress to their peers.
- More-able pupils have not consistently made as much progress as they could, when work has not been challenging enough. This is improving, but is still sometimes an issue. The school's data, for the current Year 6, indicate that a higher proportion of pupils will exceed the expected progress this year in reading, writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved, in the last few years, which has supported the rapidly improving trend in pupils' progress since 2011. Capable and enthusiastic teachers ensure lessons are well planned. They use a variety of strategies which ensure that pupils are engaged and motivated. Classrooms are bright, cheerful and well organised with displays giving prompts and information which pupils can refer to and use to assist them with their tasks.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and make good links between subjects. They use precise and lively explanations which maintain pupils' interest in the subject matter. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils were writing a comparison about the features of real and fictional insects. When pupils became unsure about factual aspects, the teacher quickly intervened and corrected any misconceptions without breaking the flow of the lesson.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together and use a range of strategies to support pupils' learning and as a result pupils want to work hard and do well. Knowledgeable and skilled teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning of the pupils they support, particularly those pupils supported by the pupil premium and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Children in Reception have access to a wide range of child initiated and adult led activities both inside the classroom and in the outside area. Resources are of good quality and children co-operate well. Parents, who spoke to inspectors, expressed very positive views about the Early Years Foundation Unit. They felt involved with their child's learning and communication was good.
- In most lessons, teachers use assessment effectively to deliver work which is well matched to pupils' needs. However, occasionally some work is a little too easy for some pupils, or too hard for others, and not all pupils make as much progress as they could.
- Pupils' books show they learn well, work hard and make consistently good progress. This is because teachers make links between past and present work which builds confidence and enjoyment in learning. However, marking does not always make clear what pupils have done well and what they need to do to further improve their work in writing. Also, there is not always enough insistence that handwriting is neat and consequently the presentation does not do justice to the content of pupils' work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are courteous, well-mannered and speak politely to visitors and each other. They routinely stand back for others to go through doors, listen respectfully to adults and respond readily to requests and instructions.
- There is a feeling of eager anticipation surrounding the start of lessons. Pupils want to do well and speak enthusiastically about their learning experiences. They say, for example, 'Learning is fun and I like school because I like learning things'.
- Pupils' thoughtful and caring attitude to one another is a strength of the school. Pupils support one another at play and during lessons. For example, pupils in Reception were co-operating well by patiently sounding out words to each other in order to successfully complete a descriptive writing task on the jungle.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school and talked about safety in other situations such as on the road, near water, what to do in case of a fire and how to keep safe whilst using computers.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is, including using the internet, and they say 'Bullying doesn't really happen' in this school. They say that upsets are due mainly to 'just falling out,' but know that adults will help them if they are worried or concerned about anything.
- The very large majority of parents believe that behaviour is good, bullying is effectively dealt with, their child feels happy, safe and is well looked after at school.
- Pupils take their responsibilities very seriously. Members of the Funky Fundraisers are proud that they raise money, by selling snacks, for school funds and the School Council help keep children safe, by writing letters to parents asking them to park cars more carefully at the start and end of the school day. Older pupils willingly help younger ones at lunch and playtimes.
- Attendance has improved and is now above average. Persistent absence is rare.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because, although pupils' attitudes to learning are generally very good, they occasionally lose concentration when teaching does not fully engage them.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject leaders work well together. They have ensured all members of staff have undertaken a range of training programmes to further improve the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, progress has improved and continues to do so and staff morale is high.
- School leaders have accurately identified the school's strengths and areas to develop. This thoughtful self-evaluation dovetails with the school's improvement plan which includes targets and success criteria enabling governors to monitor progress efficiently.
- There are clear, robust systems to monitor pupils' attainment and progress. The regular

collection and analysis of information is used carefully to check for any areas of underachievement. A good range of additional support is then put in place which enables pupils to make improved progress in their work.

- All members of staff, as part of the management of their performance, are set targets based on pupils' progress and achievements. Identified training is matched to improving teachers' skills and there is a clear link between pupils' achievements and salary progression. All this has helped improve teaching and raise achievement, particularly in the last year, in all year groups.
- The primary sports funding has been used to extend the range of after-school sporting activities available to all pupils, employing specialist coaches to improve pupils' skills and providing opportunities for all ages to take part in a greater variety of competitive and non-competitive activities with other schools.
- The curriculum is well planned to engage and motivate pupils. Pupils say they particularly enjoy visits linked to topics as it brings learning to life. For example, during the inspection, Year 3 and Year 4 visited the cinema to assist with their studies of the Vikings. A very wide range of activities enriches the curriculum and pupils are given opportunities to play a musical instrument, and engage in a wide choice of exciting artistic, linguistic, sporting and technological clubs. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. It is promoted successfully through topic work, in lessons and assemblies.
- Partnerships with parents are positive. Parents with children in Reception spoke enthusiastically about the good relations between school and home. Parents of older pupils commented favourably on the range of out of school activities, the information they receive regarding their child's progress and how they can help their child improve. However, a very few parents felt that communication could be better.
- Leaders ensure there is no discrimination. All pupils regardless of background or need have access to everything the school offers.
- The local authority has provided a programme of support which has proved effective for the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors have high expectations and a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas to develop. Governors have undertaken a raft of training to keep up to date with current legislation, are aware of current initiatives and challenge leaders on pupils' achievement. Detailed information is considered at all meetings, including data about pupils' progress and attainment including those supported by the pupil premium. Governors are aware of how the sports and pupil premium funding are spent and the impact they have on pupils' enjoyment of learning and their achievement. Governors are well informed about finances and understand their part in monitoring teachers' performance management and salary progression. They ensure safeguarding meets statutory requirements.

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	134202
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	444105

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jennifer Jones
Headteacher	Tony Walker
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2010
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