

# St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Church Road, Yate, Bristol, BS37 5GB

**Inspection dates**

5–6 June 2014

<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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress. By the time they leave, the standards they reach are above average.
- Children flourish in the Reception class because they learn in exciting and stimulating ways.
- Teachers use questioning effectively to check that pupils understand new learning and to help them to deepen their understanding further.
- The support that teaching assistants give to pupils helps them to develop their confidence and skills.
- The support given to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is effective in ensuring they make good progress. Pupils with specific difficulties are exceptionally well supported.
- Pupils feel very safe because the school does all it can to make sure that they are cared for.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They get on well together and with their teachers.
- The school places high priority on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly their appreciation of music and love of sport.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, are ambitious for the school. They know what is going well and what they need to do to make sure that St Mary's continues to improve.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to make sure that pupils make rapid progress, especially in writing.
- The elements of outstanding practice in the school are not used systematically to help all teachers to be as effective as the best.
- Teachers do not always tell pupils how to improve their work when they are writing in all the subjects they learn.
- Pupils do not have regular time to practise their skills by acting on the advice teachers give them when they mark their work.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons and parts of lessons.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other leaders in school, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and with parents and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of 58 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as the views of parents and carers from informal discussions in school.
- Inspectors considered information about how well school leaders know how good the school is and their plans for school improvement, as well as information about pupils' progress. They also looked at teachers' planning, pupils' work, documentation about safeguarding procedures and examples of the targets teachers are given as part of the management of their performance.
- The inspection team analysed the 27 questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Jeanne Simpson, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Andrea Curtis	Additional inspector
Susan Willson	Additional inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- St Mary's Church of England Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for additional funding known as the pupil premium (those eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care) is lower than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average.
- The school has been awarded Sing Up (Gold) and Artsmark (Silver) awards.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum standards set for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching, particularly regarding the teaching of writing, by:
  - using the skills of the best teachers to help others to improve
  - making sure that teachers tell pupils how to improve their work when they are writing across all the subjects they learn
  - giving pupils regular time to act on their teachers' advice and practise their skills.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is good

- Pupils achieve well. The standards they reach by the time they leave are above average.
- In 2013, attainment in writing at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 fell, but current work in books shows that pupils have made rapid progress this year and standards are rising.
- When children start school their skill levels are generally in line with those typically found for their age. They achieve exceptionally well during their first year in school so that by the time they start Year 1 a higher-than-average proportion reach a good level of development. Their skills in communication and writing are particularly well developed because of the regular opportunities they have to practise these skills through the activities they do on a daily basis.
- The youngest pupils have a good understanding of the sounds that letters make and they use their skills well when they read unfamiliar words and when they write. This was demonstrated by a child in the Reception class who wrote, 'The norty munkey took the banana.'
- The promotion of fluent and accurate reading continues throughout the school and an inability to read never holds back learning.
- During Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress from their starting points. Standards at the end of Year 2 are usually slightly above average in reading and mathematics. Although standards in writing have lagged slightly behind, they are now catching up.
- All pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2. The most able pupils do well because the work teachers set for them challenges them, and a high proportion make progress which is better than expected.
- By the time they leave in Year 6, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The standards they reach are above average.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding are supported well through the individual help they receive from teaching assistants as well as through special programmes of work chosen to meet their needs. As a result, they make progress similar to their peers and the standards they reach in Year 6 in both English and mathematics are presently higher than those of similar pupils nationally by about a year.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well from their starting points. Their progress is carefully checked so that any pupil who is falling behind is quickly identified and is given help to catch up. Pupils with specific difficulties receive exceptional support through the way that their learning experiences are tailored to help them to overcome the additional challenges they face, and there are examples of outstanding progress.

### The quality of teaching

### is good

- Pupils enjoy school and they are ready and eager to learn because teaching is lively and interesting. One example seen during the inspection was when the pupils were inspired to imagine their thoughts and feelings on approaching a mysterious house. As a result, they could not wait to get started because they all knew exactly what they were going to write, and they produced high quality work.
- Pupils are constantly challenged to do their best and they try hard. Teachers have high expectations and they plan work which provides good level of challenge for pupils of all abilities, including the more able.
- Pupils understand what they are learning and what they need to do to be successful because teachers share this information with them. Pupils use this information well when they are working to make sure that they practise and apply their newly acquired skills.
- Pupils say that they know how well they are doing from the comments teachers write when they mark their work, including in English and mathematics. The comments also help them to know what they need to do next, though pupils do not always benefit fully from the advice because they do not have regular times when they can practise their next steps.

- Marking in pupils' weekly longer pieces of writing is precise and helpful. However, this same attention to detail is not always seen when pupils are applying their writing skills in other subjects, which means that opportunities to help them to make even more rapid progress are missed.
- Reading is taught well throughout the school and there are many displays which promote reading and a love of books. The library is a very inviting place and the wide range of high quality books encourages pupils to read for pleasure.
- Teaching assistants provide very good support. This is particularly evident when they are working with the less able pupils. Their skilled questioning helps pupils to work things out for themselves and pupils' sense of achievement and pride help them to become confident, self-motivated learners.
- Teaching in the Reception classes is high quality. All adults have a keen sense of how the youngest pupils learn and the classrooms, both indoors and outdoors, draw children into learning. The current theme of 'Space' is very exciting, particularly for boys. Children become absorbed in writing postcards from the moon, sharing flying saucers between two planets to work out if numbers are odd or even. They enjoy constructing rockets and making space suits, including helmets with visors, with the wide variety of materials available.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs learn well, both when they are supported in their class and when they are working on their own or in small groups on special programmes. They know how to improve their work, which is regularly checked to make sure that they are catching up. Parents of pupils with specific difficulties are extremely positive about the way that their children are supported and the extra care that the school takes to make sure that their needs are met.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite and courteous to each other and to all adults in school. They are eager to learn and they work well together. Low-level disruption rarely interrupts learning and pupils usually only need gentle reminders to get on with their work.
- Pupils are proud of their school and the roles they play in looking after it. They enjoy taking on responsibility and the school council is active in helping to shape decisions. The classrooms and shared areas of the school are attractive and well cared for and pupils help to maintain this situation through the high levels of respect they show.
- Pupils play well together outside, using the range of play equipment sensibly. They say that there is rarely a problem with behaviour and that if there is then the lunchtime helpers help them 'work it out'.
- Parents, pupils and staff all say that behaviour is good. Pupils feel that the system of rewards and sanctions is fair and that good behaviour is recognised and rewarded. Pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour are supported well and records show that their behaviour over time improves significantly.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils' welfare is given high priority. Pupils talk very confidently about the adult whose particular role is to make sure that they feel safe, but they know that all adults will listen to them if they are worried about anything.
- Pupils know about different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. Incidents of bullying of any kind are rare and pupils say that they are dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe in a variety of situations, including when they are using the internet. The visit from the Life Skills Bus helps them to understand about such situations as 'stranger danger' and pupils learn road safety and cycling proficiency.
- Attendance is higher than average and there are very few pupils who are regularly absent from school.

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

- St Mary's vision of a happy and enthusiastic community where everyone is important and enjoys learning is clearly translated into reality on a daily basis in the school. The headteacher is committed to ensuring that the school is the best it can be and she is well supported by other leaders in school and by governors.
- Leaders of subjects are relatively new to their roles but the training they are receiving is ensuring that they are quickly developing their expertise. They know what is going well and what needs to improve. They have good subject knowledge which they have shared effectively and they have gained credibility and the respect of their colleagues. They make regular checks on achievement in their subjects and they are developing their skills in evaluating the quality of teaching.
- The leadership and management of teaching are good. Information about pupils' progress is collected frequently and is used to check that teaching is effective in helping pupils to achieve well. The rapid progress made by pupils this year shows that the quality of teaching is improving. Teachers say that the targets they are set to develop their skills are challenging and they value the training they receive. However, the skills of the best teachers are not fully exploited to help others to improve.
- The closing of the gaps between the achievement of different groups of pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium, shows the school's success in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.
- The subjects pupils learn are interesting and cover a broad range of topics in history and geography as well as themes such as 'You and Me' and 'How the World Works'. Good links are made with pupils' learning in English and mathematics so that they can practise and apply their skills in other contexts.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is given high priority and contributes effectively to pupils' overall good progress. The spiritual element is strong because of close links with the church but pupils also learn about world religions. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and they show empathy for the feelings of others. Cultural aspects are also strong and the high quality singing from Year 6 during the inspection shows the excellent standards pupils reach.
- The school has made effective use of the additional funding for sport to provide pupils with opportunities to develop healthier, fitter lifestyles. Pupils are very positive about the new experiences they have. They said, 'Sport has really lifted and one teacher has really inspired us.' Teachers' subject knowledge has improved and pupils are able to take part in a much wider range of sports and at a higher level than previously. Many pupils have joined sports groups outside school as a result of the links that have been made.
- The school's systems for safeguarding of pupils meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority has worked in close partnership with the school and has provided both high levels of challenge and effective support in helping the school to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors recognise that, in the past, they have not always held leaders accountable with enough rigour. During this academic year they have changed the way they organise their roles and responsibilities to ensure that they are now in a better position to provide higher levels of challenge. They have carried out an audit of their skills and are taking part in training to improve their skills further. Governors know how well the school is doing compared with similar schools nationally, including the use and impact of the pupil premium funding. They make regular visits to the school to check for themselves on the quality of teaching. They know what is done to improve teaching which is not of the highest quality and they make sure that only the best teachers are rewarded by progression through the pay scales. By keeping a close check on the way that funding is spent, they ensure that the school is providing good value for money.

## 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>	109264
<b>Local authority</b>	South Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	444074

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	315
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ann Crabbe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mary Baskerville
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3–4 December 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01454 867155
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