

# St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Brampton Road, Melton Mowbray, LE13 0NA

**Inspection dates** 23–24 September 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management	Good		2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good		2
Quality of teaching	Requires improvement		3
Achievement of pupils	Requires improvement		3
Early years provision	Outstanding		1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' achievement is not good over time. They do not make good progress in Key Stage 2 in reading and too few, including the most able, reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise and apply mathematical skills across a range of subjects.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged do not make as much progress as other pupils and the gap in progress and attainment between the two is not closing quickly enough.
- Teaching does not always challenge the most able but makes them work through examples which are not challenging before they can move to harder work. As a result, the most able pupils do not do as well as they should.
- Teachers do not make sure that pupils follow the advice they are given when they mark their work.
- Although leaders have secured big improvements in teaching since the academy was established, they have not ensured that all staff in Key Stage 2 are effective in teaching letters and the sounds they make.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers have set about improving the school in a systematic way. Senior leaders have introduced many changes and they have been successful in securing substantial improvements in teaching, standards and pupils' behaviour.
- Standards in writing and mathematics are above average.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and supports their learning well. They feel safe at school and know how to keep safe.
- Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is woven through most subjects, with the school's core values setting high expectations for everyone.
- Governors have a good understanding of standards and the quality of teaching, and they are effective in holding the school to account.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make rapid progress because of teaching which is often outstanding and never less than good.

### Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the academy's work and looked at a number of documents, including: information about pupils' current progress, the use of pupil premium and sports funding, the school's development plan, checks carried out by leaders on the quality of teaching, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and details of safeguarding.
- Inspectors visited 14 lessons, including two observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors observed break time, lunchtime and the start of the school day. They attended an assembly.
- An inspector met a group of pupils and talked to them about their work and about life in the school.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and reviewed work in books from the current and previous year.
- Inspectors met senior and subject leaders, a group of governors and the school improvement officer from the Leicester Academies Charitable Trust.
- The team analysed the 49 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke briefly to parents and carers as they brought their children to school in the morning. Inspectors also looked at the school's own survey of the views of parents.
- The views of 23 staff were taken into account in their responses to a written questionnaire.

### Inspection team

Gavin Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Carol Deakin

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Mary's Church of England Primary School converted to become an academy school in March 2013. When its predecessor school, St Mary's Church of England Primary, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate and to require special measures.
- The academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in single-age classes.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils of minority ethnic heritage is much lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through a statement of special educational needs, or with education, health and care plans, is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, eligible for the pupil premium, is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to help pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after.
- There is pre-school provision on the school site, but it is managed and inspected separately.
- The academy 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?

- Improve the quality of teaching by making sure that teachers:
    - check that pupils follow the advice they are given when teachers mark their work
    - incorporate more opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in work in different subjects
    - ensuring that the most able pupils move on to challenging work more quickly in lessons.
  - Improve the progress made by pupils in reading at Key Stage 2, and by the most able and disadvantaged pupils, in particular, by:
    - arranging for frequent sessions of reading to take place in which pupils receive guidance on how to improve
    - training all teachers and their assistants in the teaching of phonics (sounds and corresponding letters) and ensure that phonics is taught as effectively in Key Stage 2 as it is in the younger classesmonitoring closely the teaching of reading, the use of phonics and the progress that pupils make in their reading.
- An external review of the academy's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, leadership team and governing body have brought the academy a long way in the short time since it was formed. Although they readily acknowledge it has further to go, they have already succeeded in turning the academy around by tackling the serious shortcomings that were identified in the predecessor school.
- The leadership of the academy has ensured that improvements have been made in pupils' behaviour, the quality of teaching and learning, and in pupils' achievement, particularly in writing and mathematics. Leaders have set out very clear expectations to both staff and pupils about how and why improvements are to be made. Teaching has improved over the last year and there are now only small pockets of teaching which requires further improvement. In the same way, achievement has risen from inadequate to being above average in mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling in the unvalidated results for 2014.
- The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has provided a very positive start for children, while the leader for mathematics has ensured improvements to standards, especially for the most able pupils. The same is the case for improvements in writing, set in train by the previous leader for literacy. The current leader is very new to the post, but is well informed and has further ideas for how improvements might be made. Leaders have identified the need to improve the teaching of older pupils' reading and have planned for this by, for example, arranging for the Reception class teacher to lead training for Key Stage 2 staff in the best ways of teaching phonics.
- Leaders gather a good deal of information about the academy with which to judge success. These data are used to create a sharply focused action plan with the right priorities.
- Regular checks are carried out on the quality of teaching by the headteacher. Her evaluations of teaching and learning are well informed, incisive and accurate.
- Arrangements for assessing pupils' progress have been developed well. Class teachers and leaders track the progress pupils make very systematically and so have accurate pictures of how well individual pupils and groups are performing. Leaders discuss individual pupils with class teachers on a termly basis to identify where extra support may be needed.
- The academy provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Religious education and assemblies promote spirituality and key values, such as helping each other and tolerance. Social development is clearly seen in pupils' work as school councillors and playground leaders. Pupils show good moral understanding of ecological issues, sometimes promoted through their large school garden and wooded area. They celebrate their own culture through topic work. The programme of religious education gives good support to pupils looking at other cultures and beliefs. For example, an Indian topic in Year 6 saw pupils taking part in Indian dancing and customs and making their own Rangoli patterns.
- A good range of before- and after-school clubs, such as football, music and art groups, helps pupils gain additional skills and improve their social skills. The primary school sports premium has been used effectively by leaders to provide specialist training for teachers to increase their skills and confidence in teaching physical education. The extra funding has provided before-school sessions for pupils in both Key Stages 1 and 2, and these are well attended. Money has also been used to train the oldest pupils as Primary Sports Leaders. These actions, together with additional resources, have raised the quality of teaching in physical education lessons, introduced pupils to additional skills training and have led to better understanding of healthy-lifestyle choices.
- The subjects studied are combined into topics which are exciting, interesting and appeal to both boys and girls. English skills are brought to life for pupils in, for example, their Second World War writing.

- The Leicester Academies Charitable Trust provides good support for the academy. The school improvement adviser has made regular visits to the academy, brokered additional support and written reports for governors.

#### ■ The governance of the school:

- Governance has improved steadily since the academy's establishment. Governors have attended training, and there has been some reorganisation of committees and terms of reference to strengthen the impact of the governing body. Governors are now more able to question areas such as achievement because they now have a good understanding of data on progress and attainment, and awareness of the quality of teaching. They know about the strengths and development issues for the academy and have been party to the writing of the academy's self-evaluation document and development plan. Appointed governors set targets for the headteacher and check, through staff performance management, that pay increases for teachers are only awarded where there is evidence of their effectiveness in enabling pupils to achieve well. The governing body managed the changeover to academy status and has helped to drive the improvements in standards, behaviour and teaching from the weak position inherited from the predecessor school. Governors keep a close eye on finances and know how the pupil premium and sports funding are spent and with what success. They ensure that pupils and staff are safe in school and that all statutory requirements are met. They are kept well informed about changes to the curriculum and to assessments, and they have ensured that the academy is well prepared for the changes to these which are being introduced nationally.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are enthusiastic about learning and engage quickly in their activities. Year 6 pupils showed great enthusiasm as they marched around the school singing wartime songs, learnt as part of the topic they are studying. In Reception class, after only three weeks at school, children already respond immediately to instructions and cannot wait for lessons to start.
- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils and parents agree that this is the case. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and are particularly aware, following recent discussions, as to the potential dangers of the internet and social media.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They move around the school in a controlled way and behaviour at playtimes, though boisterous, is carefully checked by staff.
- There are clear rewards and sanctions applied to support good behaviour and these work well. Incidents of bad behaviour or bullying are now very rare. Pupils, interviewed by an inspector, say that behaviour is much improved and any incidents are quickly dealt with by staff.
- Academy records show that poor behaviour and bullying have decreased exceptionally well over the last year. Pupils themselves understand different forms of bullying and how mobile phones and the internet can lead to social problems. Their work in social and moral development supports this well.
- A small minority of parents feel behaviour is not good enough. Academy leaders acknowledge that a very small group of boys do show challenging behaviour, but this is well managed by teachers and does not interrupt learning. Parents, who spoke to an inspector on the playground expressed no concerns about behaviour and said that their children were happy and safe at school.
- Attendance rates are well above average, with some classes very close to 100% attendance last year.

### The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Although there is much good teaching, particularly of writing and mathematics, teaching requires improvement because the way reading is taught, particularly in Key Stage 2, is not ensuring that all pupils make good progress.

- In some lessons, those who understand at the outset are not pushed soon enough to move on to harder work. When this occurs, the most able pupils, in particular, make slower progress than they should.
- Work on specific topics across different subjects provides pupils with good opportunities to extend and practise their writing skills. However, the work on topics offers fewer opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills.
- Teachers try to link work with previous learning, and activities in most lessons are well planned so that pupils are helped to build on what they have learnt before. Where this happens, pupils are able to see how their knowledge and skills are growing lesson by lesson.
- Marking is carried out regularly and carefully in order to help pupils make progress. However, teachers do not all check that pupils read and act on the comments teachers write when they mark their work.
- Classrooms are bright and well organised and displays provide good support for learning. This is especially true of some 'learning walls', where pupils can track current and previous work to remind them of how they have been learning and how they can support their future learning.
- Teaching support staff are well deployed and are a valuable help to pupils, particularly some of those who have special educational needs. In all cases, relationships between adults and pupils are very positive.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children join the academy with skills and knowledge which are below those typical for their age, especially so in their literacy skills. They make rapid progress in the Reception class and, by the end of the year, are confident in moving into Year 1.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were average in 2013 but they improved significantly in writing, reading and mathematics in 2014, building on the children's good start at Reception. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 was above average in 2014 for writing and mathematics but only average for reading. Progress in reading was significantly below the nationally expected level in 2013 and unvalidated figures show little improvement for 2014. This is because the teaching of phonics and reading in Key Stage 2 is not good enough.
- In reading, pupils in Key Stage 2 do not have sufficient phonics skills to tackle unfamiliar words and difficult texts. When reading, many of the older pupils struggle to make inferences and deductions. They do not have sufficiently frequent reading sessions to help them improve their reading. They have opportunities to read but not enough to help them improve. This is particularly the case for the most able and the disadvantaged pupils.
- By contrast, the academy has had particular success in improving the quality of pupils' writing. In 2014, 10% of pupils in Year 6 reached Level 6, putting them two levels above the nationally expected standard. The development of mathematical skills has also ensured good attainment for pupils and improving progress, including for the most able. The proportion of the most able pupils who exceeded the progress seen nationally increased, and was above average in 2014.
- Pupils' good behaviour and their positive attitudes to learning add much to the progress they make. They listen carefully and are keen to get things right. They enter freely into discussions with their partners, when working in pairs, and also listen to what other people say.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who are disadvantaged, make slower progress than their peers. There are individual cases where some of these pupils make exceptional progress, but overall they are not closing the gap between themselves and others in the class rapidly enough. The number of pupils eligible for the pupil premium in Year 6 in 2013 was small. This makes it impossible to report in detail on their attainment in comparison with their classmates or pupils nationally without risk of identifying individual pupils.

- Funding for pupil premium pupils is used to provide additional members of staff to work with individuals and groups to boost their literacy and numeracy skills. It is also used to support their social development in helping finance residential visits. Some of this work has been effective but gaps are only closing slowly.

### The early years provision

### is outstanding

- Rates of progress in relation to children's starting points are consistently high in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Although children's attainment on entry fluctuates from year to year, it is generally below that expected for their age. Quite often, language and writing skills are low.
- Achievement is outstanding as a result of teaching which is often outstanding, and never less than good. Staff ensure that children settle very quickly into good routines of work and behaviour as soon as they start school, and children's attendance is high. Records show that, as a result, progress in all aspects of language skills is outstanding.
- Staff make the classroom an exciting place to learn. Colourful displays, which draw children in to look and to interact with, ensure that children are never bored and seldom find themselves with time on their hands.
- Even at this very early part of the year, children currently in the Reception class respond extremely well to instructions, listen carefully when adults speak and are keen to answer questions. They show great eagerness to learn.
- Adults provide a wide range of learning experiences for the children. Some lessons are led by adults so that children learn new skills and knowledge directly. They are then set activities in which they can practise and extend these skills.
- In other lessons, children are free to sample the wide range of activities on offer, both inside and outside the classroom. At these times, adults may be working directly with small groups of children or interacting with many children, extending their vocabulary and providing additional impetus to learning.
- Checks on children's progress are carried out regularly and do not disrupt the flow of learning. The information which staff collect on what each child is learning is then used carefully to plan the next steps in each child's learning.
- Parents are very involved and engaged in their children's work, exemplified by books on their children's 'learning journey', to which many parents contribute.

## 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>	139194
<b>Local authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	447827

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>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	182
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Leicester Academies Charitable Trust
<b>Chair</b>	Derek Kerr
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sharon Deackes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected as an academy
<b>Telephone number</b>	01664 562500
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