

St Mary's CofE (A) Primary School

Bellamour Way, Colton, Rugeley, WS15 3LN

Inspection dates

6–7 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders and governors know how well the school is performing. They understand how well pupils are progressing and know what they need to focus on to ensure pupils make even better progress.
- Pupils make at least good progress in every year group. They leave the school having attained well above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Behaviour is outstanding, with pupils making sensible choices when playing and learning with each other.
- Teaching is consistently good and this has been the case over time.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported by the school.
- Leaders have carried out detailed research to help in the development of their new curriculum. They are currently exploring what their preferred ways of assessing pupil performance will look like.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not give pupils challenging enough work in their mathematics lessons.
- Pupils do not always follow the advice teachers give them on how to improve their writing.

Information about this inspection

- Lessons were observed in every year group. Five of the seven lessons were jointly observed with the executive headteacher.
- Pupils talked about their reading and the inspector heard a group of children read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and two local authority representatives.
- The 18 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire were taken into account and recent parent survey information was referred to. The inspector also spoke with parents and carers.
- The views expressed in questionnaires returned by 11 members of the school staff were considered.
- The inspector observed the work of the school, looking at a range of documentation. This included an examination of work in pupils' books.
- The school's child protection and safeguarding procedures were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Jeremy Bird, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mary's is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- It is federated with a local primary school and has recently formed a loose collaboration with another primary school.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of one full-time Reception class.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- At 17%, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for the pupil premium, is below the national average.
- With 10% supported at school action and 13% supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is just above the national average.
- The executive headteacher is a Local Leader of Education.
- The school manages a before and after school childcare facility.
- The number of pupils in Year 6 in 2014 was too small for results to be compared with the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
 - teachers provide pupils with more challenging work in their mathematics lessons
 - pupils consistently follow the advice given to them by teachers to improve their writing.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher and deputy headteacher know how well staff and pupils are performing. Along with other school leaders, they keep the governing body informed through regular presentations at meetings.
- Subject leaders have benefited from the federation with a local school. Expertise is shared and staff from both schools work together to make further improvements. A recent example is how staff have researched ways to create a new curriculum for their school. This new curriculum is intended to continue to ensure that the school prepares its pupils well for life in modern Britain. Another school, recently linked with the federation, also benefits from this expertise. The school leader who is accountable for the provision and progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs coordinates this work across the federation.
- The school is currently developing its preferred approach to assessment following the removal of National Curriculum levels. For the time being, it continues to use the existing methods but plans to have new systems in place for the start of the next academic year.
- There are effective processes for managing the performance of teachers and these have ensured that teaching is consistently good in all year groups. Teachers, including two who were newly qualified this year, value the way their performance is managed. They appreciate the advice given by school leaders from both schools in the federation and adapt their teaching accordingly.
- The school recently requested the local authority to carry out a review of its performance. This review celebrated the many achievements of the school and provided comments for the school to consider for further improvement.
- The school uses its pupil premium funding to increase the support provided by teaching assistants and tutors. Eligible pupils' rates of progress are closely monitored. As a result, progress is typically good for this group of pupils.
- The school has made very effective use of primary school physical education and sport funding. It has engaged with its network of schools to not only identify which clubs and activities to offer the pupils but has also invested in mini-buses which enable more pupils to attend competitive events.
- All leaders ensure that pupils are tolerant and respectful. The good working relationships with all pupils leads to pupils feeling safe and secure in the school. Discrimination does not occur because pupils know how to get on with each other.
- Leaders ensure that all staff are familiar with safeguarding processes, with all relevant policies kept up to date and reviewed in the light of local and national guidance. Via the executive headteacher's role across the federation, all staff receive timely training.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body oversees the two schools in the federation. It works in close partnership with the school's leadership team, ensuring that staff skills are shared between the schools.
 - The governing body has sought ways to make its practice more efficient. For example, its meetings are now more focused on priority agenda items, with other policy items being delegated outside the main meetings. Minutes do not currently reflect the discussions about pupils' progress that governors say take place.
 - Governors are informed about the performance of teachers and the executive headteacher. They make decisions about teachers' pay based on pupils' progress. They support the development of all staff; an example being the prompt booking to attend required training for the newly appointed coordinator for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
 - The governing body ensures that all statutory responsibilities are met, including those relating to

safeguarding.

- The governing body knows the impact of its use of sports funding, with more pupils enjoying taking part in and competing in a wider range of activities. It is also aware of the impact of pupil premium funding and is now keen to review in greater detail the progress of each pupil eligible for the funding to explore how this can be further improved.
- Governors are aware of how the school is developing its new curriculum. They continue to work with school leaders to ensure that pupils have a wide range of cultural experiences and are keen to understand better how the school promotes tolerance of, and respect for, people of all faiths and those of no faith.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils demonstrate a thirst for knowledge in all subjects. They thrive on work which challenges their current knowledge and understanding. They behave very well in lessons and show excellent conduct around school, including at breakfast club and at play times.
- Recent improvement in attendance is a notable success story for the school. Prior to the last academic year, attendance was in line with national averages. By ensuring that parents know that any holidays taken in term time would be recorded as unauthorised, and rewarding pupils for high attendance, the school recorded its attendance as well above the national average last year. This high level has been maintained during the current academic year.
- Pupils work and play well together. When presented with choices – for example, whether to include others in their games – they make good choices as they have a strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils are keen to talk about their learning with each other, exploring possible solutions to problems. These very positive attitudes contribute greatly to the good progress they make in lessons, as well as to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying and the different forms it can take. They know how the school tackles bullying, stating that any issues are dealt with quickly and effectively. Parents and staff agree that the school approach is very effective.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils talk freely about feeling safe in and around school and can give examples, including how the doors and gates are secured and how they value supervision at break times which enables them to talk with adults when they want to.
- The school is rigorous in ensuring that all staff have completed the required training. School leaders make checks that school policies are implemented consistently. All staff, including those working with pupils outside of the school working day, are checked to ensure they are suitable to work with children.
- Pupils talk about how they enjoy getting along with their peers. In lessons, pupils demonstrate their understanding of what tolerance means by listening to, and reflecting on, each other's opinions. They are very respectful of their school and of each other.
- Pupils say that the school prepares them very well to stay safe, including when using computers and the internet. They regularly follow this advice and, as a result, feel reassured when using online devices outside of school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good in every year group. Where the teaching is most effective, pupils benefit from teachers' and teaching assistants' excellent subject knowledge. In lessons, staff use this knowledge to skilfully question pupils who are then able to think about what they are learning and make better progress.

- In lessons, pupils know what the expectations are, not only in terms of how to display their work but also how they can access support from teachers, teaching assistants and also from their peers.
- Parents and carers talk about how they value the partnership with the school, particularly in the earlier years. Teachers work closely with parents to see how they can further support pupils' progress. An example is in the development of early reading skills with regular dialogue seen, both verbal and written.
- Reading is taught well throughout the school. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use their knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) in their writing. This enables the pupil and adults to read their ideas and then discuss how to make improvements. As a result of good teaching over time, standards have risen at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Marking is consistently good as it confirms how well pupils have done and identifies how pupils can make further improvements in their work. Pupils make accelerated rates of progress when they not only respond to comments made but also that they make sure they use their skills in subsequent work.
- Pupils are given plenty of time to write. The most-able pupils benefit most here as they reflect on how to make their writing even better and then edit their writing accordingly. For other groups, progress is more varied, with pupils not always ensuring that their writing reflects the new skills they have been developing. Teachers provide pupils with clear advice, but pupils do not consistently follow the advice they are given to improve their writing.
- Mathematics is taught well to all ability groups. Teaching is not yet outstanding as pupils are not always set challenging enough tasks. When this does occur pupils thrive on the harder work. Pupils make faster progress as they have to think harder, responding to skilful questioning from both teachers and teaching assistants. Staff are able to ask such questions as they draw on their excellent subject knowledge.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children joining the school in Reception have skills which are typical for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, leaving Reception with skills above national averages. Through Key Stage 1, pupils continue to make good progress. By the time pupils leave Year 6, their attainment is well above the national average, having made good progress through Key Stage 2.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make consistently good progress. This is due to effective leadership and management of the provision for this group of pupils. Clear action plans are drawn up for teaching and support staff to follow. Pupils' progress is closely monitored, with changes made to the work given where this is needed.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is typically good. In 2014, there were too few such pupils in Year 6 to comment on their attainment without risk of identifying individual pupils.
- The most-able pupils make consistently good progress throughout the school. This group of pupils reach high levels in reading, writing and mathematics. This group particularly relishes the opportunity to tackle more challenging work, especially in mathematics.
- Pupils in all year groups enjoy reading. Through excellent phonics standards, mastered in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 1, pupils are able to read a wide range of books. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 talked about how much they value the support they receive from their parents, teachers and teaching assistants.
- Pupils reach high standards in their writing. Writing is well presented in books and this has been the case over time.
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics has improved over the last three years. Progress is good in every year group. As with writing, pupils consistently present their work clearly in books. In mathematics, they

understand why it is important to accurately lay their work out as it supports both their calculation work and problem solving.

The early years provision

is good

- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Staff quickly and accurately assess children when they arrive in Reception. Progress of each child is closely monitored, with plans and targets adapted to reflect each child's learning. As a result, children of all abilities make good progress through the year.
- Parents value the partnership with the school and contribute by providing staff with information about their child's interests and progress outside of school. Teaching benefits from this as staff use this information to ensure children are motivated in their learning.
- Effective provision for childrens' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development can be seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Strong relationships between staff and children are an important factor here. Children behave well and know how to stay safe in school.
- With children making such good progress through the Reception Year, they attain a good level of development. This means they are well prepared for the Year 1 curriculum. A good example can be seen in their secure knowledge of phonics, with pupils using this knowledge to achieve excellent outcomes in the Year 1 phonic screening check.

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	124335
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	448170

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	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Heather Bowman
Headteacher	Paul Lovern
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2009
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