

St Mary's Church of England Primary Academy, Burton Latimer

High Street, Burton Latimer, Kettering, NN15 5RL

Inspection dates 18–19 March 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Pupils do not make strong enough progress. They do not do as well as they might in reading, writing or mathematics.
- Pupils eligible for additional funding do less well than others in the Year 6 tests.
- Teaching has not been strong enough for long enough to ensure that pupils learn well over time.
- Not enough is expected of pupils, especially the lower attainers. They are not always given the support they need, nor are they always given hard enough work.
- The quality of marking of pupils' work is inconsistent.
- Leaders, managers and governors have, until very recently, not ensured that enough teaching is good. As a result, though improving over the past term, pupils' achievement has not been good over time.
- Governors have not, in the past, ensured that additional government funds to support disadvantaged pupils and physical education have been spent to the best effect.
- The academy has not handled significant leadership and staffing disruption well enough. This has led to justifiable parental concerns about progress in some classes.

The school has the following strengths

- The quality of teaching has improved significantly in this school year due to the very effective work of the interim executive Principal.
- Some marking is excellent and helps pupils to accelerate their learning. The most-able pupils do well in the academy.
- The academy promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. They value and respect each others' different viewpoints.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They respond well to challenge. They are well looked after and kept safe.
- Children in Reception classes make a good start to their learning because teaching is consistently good.
- The governing body is committed to improvement and has recently adopted a rigorous stance in holding the academy to account for its performance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 18 lessons, four of which were seen jointly with a senior leader.
- They looked at work in many pupils' books in several different subjects including English and mathematics. They listened to pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 reading.
- Inspectors spoke with teachers, middle leaders and senior leaders, and governors. They had meetings with clergy and a representative from the diocese. They held formal and informal meetings with pupils.
- The views of parents were gained from the 46 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) and through conversations with several parents personally and by telephone.
- The views of staff were gained from meetings and from the 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at the academy's records relating to: the safeguarding of pupils, their behaviour and their attendance; the progress being made by pupils currently on the roll of the academy and those who had recently left; the records of governing body meetings; self evaluation and improvement planning; the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.

Inspection team

Terry McDermott, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lascelles Haughton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It has commenced a planned expansion to have two classes per year group.
- The academy currently has two full-time Reception classes, two Year 1 classes and two Year 5 classes. All other Year groups have a single class.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is broadly average. The pupil premium is additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average. Almost all pupils speak English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- St Mary's Church of England Primary School converted to become an academy school on 1 April 2013. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- The academy is part of the Cross Keys Academies Trust.
- The previous principal resigned in the summer of 2014.
- The current executive principal (from September 2014) is also the principal of another academy within the Cross Keys Trust.
- The academy has undergone significant staffing turbulence which is not yet fully resolved.
- A new principal has been appointed from Easter 2015.
- A new classroom block of eight rooms has recently opened.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maintain and extend the recent improvements in teaching so that pupils' progress continues to accelerate and standards continue to rise by:
 - always having high expectations of what pupils can achieve in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the academy
 - sharing the good practice that already exists in several classes within the academy
 - ensuring that the academy's marking policy is strictly followed
 - ensuring that the work set for lower attaining pupils is never too easy.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management by:
 - quickly appointing staff with the necessary skills to overcome the remaining teaching and learning issues in the academy
 - checking frequently and rigorously on the amount of learning taking place in lessons
 - checking that the recently introduced focus on the performance of disadvantaged and lower-attaining pupils is maintained by all teachers

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders at all levels, including governors, have not moved with sufficient urgency over several years to accelerate the progress pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The pupil premium has not been used effectively. It has not been directed specifically to supporting those pupils for whom it was intended. Until recently, this led to disadvantaged pupils doing even less well than they should do. Gaps in attainment and progress had been widening. However, from 2014 onwards, the academy's planning records and tracking data shows gaps are closing appreciably.
- Additional funding for primary physical education has been used inconsistently. It has had a positive benefit on widening participation and encouraging healthy life styles, but has done little to increase the skills of teachers. Governors have recently taken a much more high profile involvement in ensuring effective deployment of this funding.
- Knowledgeable and committed middle leaders have not, until recently, been able to take responsibility for the performance of pupils in those areas of the academy for which they are accountable. Though they are now very active in monitoring and evaluating the quality of learning taking place in lessons, the full impact of their work over time remains to be seen.
- Less-able pupils have not been supported well enough in lessons. As a result they have consistently made less progress than other groups of pupils.
- The academy's self evaluation is accurate. The arrival of the temporary executive principal in the summer of 2014 cleared away many barriers to improvement. It enabled the transformation of the quality of teaching to begin. This process is now established. Staff morale has risen as a consequence and pupils say they have noticed the effects. Attendance has risen.
- The academy's curriculum is good. It is successfully encouraging pupils to apply their reading, writing and mathematical skills in a range of topical situations, often concerned with investigating or researching a theme such as, for example, 'volcanoes'. Pupils say they like finding out about new things in this way.
- In response to the changes being made nationally to assessment arrangements, and in concert with other academies in the Cross Keys Trust, the academy is moving steadily towards an agreed method of measuring pupils' progress over time.
- The academy has very effective arrangements for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils' well-being. Current statutory requirements are met. Senior staff are well qualified and all other staff are appropriately trained. Policies and protocols are strictly adhered to. Records are meticulously maintained.
- All staff work in harmony to ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The academy is a very calm place to be. A very strong thread of respect for the views and opinions of others runs through the academy. The foundations are laid firmly in the early years provision and these are quietly but persistently reinforced throughout the academy. Pupils know there is no discrimination or bias here. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The academy works closely with its Trust partners to ensure that the leadership and management of the academy, and aspects of teaching and learning, can continue to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body did not previously challenge leaders enough over the quality of education being provided. Since becoming an academy, the governing body has become much clearer about the real position the academy is in. More governors are directly involved in knowing about the work of the

academy and in ensuring that good performance in the classroom is suitably rewarded.

- Governors have attended training events and joined the National Governors Association. This has given them a good understanding of how to use data to see how well pupils are making progress. They are now in a well informed position to ask questions about the quality of learning throughout the academy. They are now overseeing the academy's use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for physical education with rigour.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well even when not directly supervised. This ensures that the academy is a calm and purposeful place. Pupils are polite to visitors and with each other. They cooperate well whether they are learning in classrooms, eating lunch or playing outside.
- Attendance is always close to or above the national average. In the current academy year it is well above the 2014 average. Pupils say they like coming to the academy and older ones say the academy has 'got much better since September'.
- Teachers have high expectations that pupils will work hard and behave well in lessons. This was evident in the very large majority of lessons seen by inspectors. Pupils told inspectors that they are very clear about the academy's standards for behaviour and this helps them to know what is or is not acceptable.
- Pupils' behaviour is not outstanding because in some lessons they lose concentration and their attention wanders when they are not fully engaged by the teaching.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All the necessary requirements are met, and records are meticulously maintained.
- Pupils know that they can talk to their teachers if they feel unsure about anything. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and they can describe why this is. Staff fully endorsed this view though a small number of parents were not as certain.
- Pupils are aware of the different forms of bullying, and though they say it is rare, they know it is very quickly dealt with if it happens. Inspectors checked the records of these incidents and noted that the academy's actions are effective because staff follow up alleged incidents thoroughly.
- There have been no exclusions of any type since the academy opened. They are unnecessary because pupils are sensible and cautious and have learned not to take undue risks.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching is inconsistent across the academy. This inconsistency inhibits pupils from making at least good progress over time in reading, writing and mathematics. This has been the case, particularly in Key Stage 2, for some time.
- In some lessons, teachers do not get the best out of the pupils because they do not set work which demands enough of them.
- Planning is inconsistent and information about what pupils know and can do has not, until very recently, been used to set work at the correct level. Work has been too easy for some and too difficult for others. This has led to progress that requires improvement.
- Teachers do not always check on how well different pupils are progressing in lessons closely enough, and so learning for disadvantaged pupils and for the least-able pupils is slower than it should be.

- The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent between classes and also between subjects within classes. Some marking is irregular, some merely celebrates good work and not enough provides guidance on what to do next to improve. Too often pupils are not given opportunities to correct, extend or improve their work. This limits the possibilities of making good progress.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils when they are clear about their roles and responsibilities.
- Some teachers plan work very effectively and set intriguing tasks, often beginning with 'What if...?', at different levels for different pupils. This sparks pupils' curiosity and interest and inspires them to work things out for themselves. In these instances learning is rapid and obvious and some pupils make outstanding progress.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. This gives some the confidence to explore pupils' ideas more fully through effective questioning. This deepens pupils' understanding of, for example, scale drawing when creating a birds-eye view of Burton Latimer village centre. When doing this, pupils' became engrossed in their work, sustained concentration for long periods, and increased their speaking, writing, drawing and mathematical skills in a single very effective lesson.
- Work seen in pupils' books confirms the academy's tracking records which suggest that progress in writing and mathematics has recently taken a significant step forward.
- The atmosphere in lessons is uniformly positive. Resources for learning are good and relationships between adults and children are very strong.
- The academy has good capacity to improve teaching and learning further.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- From generally typical starting points when entering the academy, most pupils leaving Year 6 in 2014 made the progress expected of them in reading and writing, though not in mathematics. Not enough of them made more than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In the national tests in 2014, the standards reached by pupils leaving Year 6 were about a term behind that of other pupils nationally in writing and mathematics, and a little ahead of other pupils nationally in reading. Progress in reading was better than in writing and mathematics because the academy focused strongly on improving reading. These results were a small improvement over the previous two years.
- The progress made to the end of Year 6 in 2014 by disadvantaged pupils was slower than the average for other pupils in the academy in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Their attainment was about three terms behind that of their classmates in writing, a term and a half behind in reading, and a term behind in mathematics.
- When compared to pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils were around four terms behind in writing, a year behind in mathematics, and a term behind in reading. However, evidence in pupils' books and in the academy's records indicate that gaps are now closing as a result of the greater focus on these pupils' performance.
- Middle, and particularly lower, attaining pupils did not make good progress. They made less progress than the most-able pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well. They make good progress in relation to their starting points.

- Attainment at the end of Year 2 has been broadly average for some years. However, in 2014, standards improved noticeably in reading, writing and mathematics as the cumulative result of more consistently demanding teaching in the early years provision and in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils are now developing their reading and writing skills well through well-organised, tightly-focused and high-quality application of an effective and well-known initiative. This is supported well through guided reading lessons. Pupils say they enjoy reading for pleasure.
- Pupils are developing their mathematical skills and understanding well. They are being provided with many opportunities to extend them through problem solving exercises in mathematics lessons and to apply these skills in different subjects throughout the academy.
- The academy's predictions, which were largely accurate for Year 6 in 2014, are indicating an improved set of results for the 2015 tests in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most-able pupils throughout the academy are regularly set challenging work in lessons and are making good progress as a result.

The early years provision is good

- Children achieve well in the setting. They join the school with a range of different experiences.
- By the end of Reception in 2014, an average proportion of children had reached a good level of development and were well prepared for Year 1. Girls were well in advance of the boys in the group.
- The early years provision is well organised and led by a knowledgeable, enthusiastic and creative leader. Leadership of this part of the academy is good because it has been established for longer. Team working has developed into a considerable strength. Teaching is consistently good and often better. This ensures good learning.
- The brand new facilities, both indoor and outdoor, are already well used to inspire learning. The recent 'Crime Scene Investigator' topic set up between the school and the local police created an atmosphere of wonder and curiosity amongst the children, sparked discussions about what were facts or assumptions, and planted seeds about fairness and tolerance amongst the children. It also led directly to enthusiastic and extended writing and colourful artwork.
- Children behave well as a result of high expectations from staff and well established, clear and consistently applied routines. Children feel, and are, safe.
- Communications with parents are good, and 'learning journey' books are of high quality. They show the results of the good personal habits of patience, respect, and sharing instilled into the children, as well as their growing literacy and numeracy skills.

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	139463
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	449922

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vince Thomas
Principal	Jonathan Gardiner
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an Academy
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