

St Andrew's Church of England Infant School

High Street, Great Linford, Milton Keynes MK14 5AX

Inspection dates	4–5 May 2016
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Instability in leadership has meant that leaders have not checked the quality of teaching and learning enough. Some shortcomings have not been identified. Consequently, leaders and governors have an inaccurate view of the school's effectiveness and teaching is not good.
- Leaders and governors do not measure the impact of their work on pupils' learning. Improvement plans do not set clear targets for pupils' progress, or define appropriate timescales. Plans are not sufficiently focused on addressing weaknesses.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making inconsistent progress. Leaders have not made effective use of the pupil premium to raise their achievement.
- Not all pupils with special educational needs or disability are making enough progress. This is because some do not receive enough support.
- Not enough pupils are making good progress in English and mathematics and pupils are not reaching the standards expected for their age. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is too low.
- Year 1 pupils' attainment in phonics has fallen for the past two years to well below the national average. Some staff do not have good knowledge of phonics. Not all pupils have enough opportunities to learn and practise phonics.
- Not all teachers have high enough expectations of pupils' learning. This is particularly the case for Year 1 pupils. As a result, pupils make less progress in Year 1 than in other year groups.
- Some tasks are too challenging for pupils and others are too easy. Some teachers do not ensure that lessons match pupils' abilities well enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is a harmonious community. Pupils behave well and care for each other. Staff are committed and enthusiastic.
- Children in the Reception class make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils feel safe. Leaders prioritise pupils' well-being to help keep them safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - regularly monitoring the quality of teaching and learning
 - using the information from monitoring to evaluate accurately the school's effectiveness and improve teaching
 - making effective use of pupil premium funding to raise the achievement of all disadvantaged pupils
 - providing consistent support for all pupils with special educational needs or disability
 - refining improvement plans so that they have clear timescales and measurable targets, and are sufficiently focused on improving pupils' outcomes
 - ensuring that leaders and governors rigorously measure the impact of their work on pupils' progress, including those in different groups.

- Raise achievement, particularly in phonics and mathematics in key stage, 1 by:
 - providing frequent, challenging phonics lessons and ensuring that pupils apply their phonics knowledge when reading and writing
 - ensuring that all staff have a good knowledge and understanding of phonics
 - setting high expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly those in Year 1
 - planning suitably challenging tasks for all pupils.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- There has been some instability in leadership. As a result, not enough checks on the quality of teaching and learning have taken place. Senior leaders have not used pupils' progress information accurately enough to inform their judgement of the school's effectiveness. Consequently, leaders and governors have an inaccurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders have not planned improvements to tackle some areas of weakness, such as low attainment in phonics.
- Plans to improve the school are not sufficiently focused on securing improvements in pupils' progress. Leaders have identified some appropriate actions to take, such as raising the achievement of pupils with special educational needs or disability. However, these do not include measurable targets for pupils' progress and it is not clear when the actions are due to take place. Therefore, it is difficult for leaders and governors to check whether the plans are on track or raising standards in teaching and learning.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are a strong and cohesive partnership. Both leaders effectively promote equalities and welcome all to the school community. They have ensured that a consistent culture in the school prevails that promotes happiness and enjoyment and nurtures each individual. This care is extended to all staff. As a result, the staff team is committed and enthusiastic.
- There is a system in place to hold teachers to account and promote improvements to teaching. Teachers are set targets to raise pupils' achievement, develop their skills and address some of the school's priorities for improvement. However, teachers do not receive enough helpful feedback or training to enable them to make important changes to the way that they teach. Some shortcomings have not been identified. Therefore, leaders do not effectively hold teachers to account and teaching, learning and assessment are not yet good.
- Leaders have not made effective use of the pupil premium funding. Disadvantaged pupils' achievement is too variable. Spending has focused mainly on providing pupils with additional resources and funding extra-curricular activities. Leaders have recently recognised the need to support disadvantaged pupils' learning better. They have started to make some changes. However, it is too early to see the impact of this work.
- The special needs coordinator has ensured that pupils with special educational needs or disability receive some appropriate support. Pupils with the most complex needs benefit from the regular help of teaching assistants. However, leaders have not ensured that the support that other pupils with special educational needs or disability receive is consistent. As a result, these pupils are not achieving well enough.
- Senior leaders have set clear expectations and made provision for the teaching of the most-able pupils. As a result, the large majority of the most-able pupils are achieving well. The curriculum provides ample opportunities to extend and deepen pupils' learning. Through Aspire, the local schools' network, most-able pupils collaborate with others to solve problems in additional lessons. For example, a recent forensic science lesson allowed pupils to 'solve' a crime.
- The curriculum is wide ranging and interesting for pupils. They enjoy topics that link all subjects such as 'Land ahoy!', where pirates inspire pupils. Each topic starts with an exciting experience. For example, the topic 'Wiggle and crawl' started with a visit from some exotic creatures. One pupil said, 'Even the teachers held the tarantula!'. Extra-curricular activities further broaden pupils' learning. Clubs such as those for tennis, football, computing and sewing are popular and are attended by most pupils.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is well supported through topics. For example, pupils learn about life in other places such as South America and consider how they feel about the way that pirates behaved. The school's own values further this work and promote British values. Assemblies about 'Trust, family, respect and friendship' enable these young pupils to recognise and appreciate differences in Britain and understand the importance of rules and laws.
- The additional sports funding has been spent well. Pupils have benefited from a variety of competitive events and activities, such as fencing, dance and multi-skills. As a result, more pupils are participating in a wider range of sports.
- The local authority has supported governors to make changes to the staffing to ensure that there is sufficient leadership. However, the school has not been a priority for the local authority and it has not maintained close enough oversight of the school's effectiveness.

- Leaders provide a range of activities to involve parents in school life. Parents enjoy sharing in assemblies that celebrate the end of each topic. There are also opportunities for parents to find out about the curriculum, particularly for English and mathematics. Consequently, parents are very positive about the work of the school.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors maintain oversight of their responsibilities. For example, they hold the headteacher to account through performance management and link this to the school development plan. Governors provide some challenge to senior leaders. However, the quality of this challenge varies because governors have not used pupils' progress information well enough to measure the impact of leaders' actions on pupils' learning.
 - Governors are committed to improving their effectiveness. They have started to evaluate their own skills to ensure that they are better equipped to hold leaders to account.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders prioritise pupils' welfare and maintain a culture of vigilance to help keep pupils safe. The school has worked successfully with other schools and agencies to address concerns about pupils' well-being.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **requires improvement**

- Teaching does not enable enough pupils to make good progress. Consequently teaching, learning and assessment require improvement.
- Not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Expectations of pupils in Year 1 in particular are sometimes too low. This limits what pupils can achieve.
- Some staff do not have a good enough understanding of phonics. This means that some lessons do not enable pupils to learn this essential skill. Furthermore, not all pupils receive regular phonics lessons. As a result, pupils do not use phonics well enough to help them read and spell words.
- Teachers do not consistently provide tasks that match pupils' needs. Some tasks are given to all pupils of the same age. Consequently, tasks are sometimes too easy for some pupils and too challenging for others.
- In the best lessons, teachers use assessment well to provide lessons that accurately match pupils' needs. In one mathematics lesson, some children in the Reception class were working with a teaching assistant to learn how to double single-digit numbers. The teaching assistant asked children questions and used helpful language to enable the children to find out for themselves what doubling means by giving two teddy bears an equal number of biscuits. The teaching assistant enabled the children to write their sums and talk about the patterns in the numbers.
- When teachers have a good understanding of the subjects they teach, they use this well to support pupils to make good progress. For example, Year 1 pupils planned, designed and created leaves with minibeasts on them using clay. The pottery showed great attention to detail and that the pupils had grasped a range of techniques to create different effects.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support to pupils. They work closely with teachers to ensure that they know what pupils are learning. Teaching assistants provide pupils with helpful prompts and questions that enable them to succeed in tasks.
- There are high expectations for the presentation of pupils' work. Pupils regularly practise handwriting and take pride in their work. Consequently, pupils across the school present work well in their books.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident. Teachers provide pupils with lots of opportunities to develop their confidence, including whole-school performances on the outdoor stage. Parents appreciate how the school supports personal development. One parent said, 'Within the first term, my children's personalities grew'. Consequently, pupils tackle tasks with enthusiasm.

- Pupils are friendly towards each other and appreciate each other's differences. Pupils say that they are kind to each other because they follow the school motto, 'We care, we share, we learn, we grow...together'. As a result, there is no discrimination.
- Pupils feel safe at school. Parents agree. There are few recorded incidents of bullying. Pupils can explain some ways to stay safe and healthy, such as eating 'five a day'. However, they were not able to describe what they had learned about safety. For example, pupils could not explain what bullying is although they were confident that adults effectively address any problems.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Around the school and in class, pupils behave well. They take care of each other and treat each other fairly. One pupil 'referee' reported a football score as 'three – nil and a half' because he felt that one friend almost scored a goal. Pupils demonstrate excellent manners when dining. The school is a harmonious community.
- There have been no exclusions in the past three years and incidents of poor behaviour are rare. Pupils report that they behave well despite setting high expectations of themselves to be 'even kinder'. Pupils know the school rules and strive to follow them as best they can.
- Pupils attend school regularly. Rates of absence have fallen over time and are close to the national average. Senior leaders work closely with families to improve the attendance of some pupils and rightly challenge parents who take holidays in term time.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Not enough pupils are making good progress from their starting points in English and mathematics. As a result, some pupils are not reaching the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress across key stage 1 is variable. Fewer pupils currently in Year 1 are making expected progress in writing and mathematics than in Year 2. Last year, not enough pupils in Year 1 made good progress in English and mathematics. Consequently, pupils' current attainment across key stage 1 is not high enough. This is because teachers' expectations of pupils' work in Year 1 are too low.
- For the past two years, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check has fallen to well below the national average. Last year, only a small minority of pupils reached the standard expected for their age. Current pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 are not making good enough progress in phonics. Phonics teaching is not enabling pupils in key stage 1 to reach the expected standards for their age.
- Pupils' current attainment in mathematics is lower than in reading and writing. Fewer pupils reached the higher level in mathematics last year than in other subjects at the end of Year 2. Some mathematical tasks in key stage 1 are too easy for pupils.
- The small number of disadvantaged pupils are making variable progress. Some disadvantaged pupils are not achieving the standards expected for their age because their rates of progress are not high enough. There has not been sufficient focus on raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Some pupils with special educational needs or disability are receiving better support than others. These pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Some pupils with special educational needs or disability are not achieving as well because they do not receive consistent additional support.
- The large majority of the most-able pupils are making good progress and are reaching standards above those expected for their age across the curriculum. This is because there are sufficient opportunities for these most-able pupils to deepen their learning. Some of the most-able pupils in Year 1 are not achieving as well in English and mathematics because their work is not as challenging.
- Over the past five years, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been similar to the national average at the end of key stage 1. In 2015, the attainment of boys and girls was similar. Boys' achievement was higher than that of other boys nationally.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has risen over the past three years. In 2014 and 2015, children's attainment was above that of others nationally.

- Pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics is good. Most pupils are reaching the standards expected for their age across the range of subjects.

Early years provision

is good

- Children join the school with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. They make good progress in the Reception class across all of the areas of learning. As a result, most children are ready for Year 1 by the end of the year. In 2015, a majority of children exceeded the expectations for their age and were very well prepared for the next stage of learning.
- The early years leader has focused on securing high-quality teaching and learning. She has ensured that teachers from both schools in the federation plan together to maximise expertise. The leader has also made changes to the way that phonics is taught. As a result, children are making good progress in reading. Nevertheless, the leader is not yet making the best use of children's progress information to plan further improvements to the provision.
- Teachers plan exciting activities that capture children's interests, make effective links across the areas of learning and ensure that children regularly practise writing. Consequently, children make good progress in writing. For example, this term, the topic is 'Why do ladybirds have spots?' and one of the class books is 'The snail and the whale'. In a lesson, the children found the word 'help' written in sequins in the classroom. The teacher encouraged children to use their sounds to read it. A further message was discovered on the whiteboard. This explained that the messages were from the snails who were looking for their lost friends. Children worked together to use their knowledge of snails to write a description for a 'missing' poster.
- Staff benefit from a range of training opportunities. In particular, teachers and teaching assistants have developed their skills and knowledge so that they make accurate checks on children's learning. They use this assessment information well to challenge children to take appropriate next steps. For example, one child was stacking small hoops to double 12. The teaching assistant recognised that he could already count larger numbers confidently and encouraged him to count in groups of tens and ones. All children, including those with English as an additional language and those who are disadvantaged, are making good progress because teaching is well matched to their different needs and abilities.
- Parents value the opportunities that they have to work in partnership with the school. They appreciate the high level of individual care that their children receive and daily contact with staff. Parents share information about their child's achievements in the home learning books. Good communication is in place to support children's learning.
- Children behave very well in the Reception class. They take care of each other and act safely. This is because staff teach them how to play safely together. Staff are on hand to provide the right amount of care and support. For example, a group of children playing as butterflies were using play equipment as stepping stones. One child kindly invited others to go before her. Another was unsure about making a bigger step and asked the teaching assistant to help. The teaching assistant held her finger out and rightly said, 'I know you don't really need me,' as the child stepped confidently across.

School details

Unique reference number	110443
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10003673

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	38
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Argent
Headteacher	Anne Shedden
Telephone number	01908 605515
Website	www.standrewsinfantschool.co.uk
Email address	office@st-andrews.milton-keynes.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 July 2011

Information about this school

- St Andrew’s Church of England Infant School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- A small number of pupils are known to be disadvantaged and eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is similar to the national average. Few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- A very small minority of pupils have special educational needs or disability.
- The school is federated with Sherington Church of England Primary School. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governing body lead both schools. Senior leaders split their time equally between both sites.
- The deputy headteacher was recently appointed to this new post.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons and parts of lessons, two of which were conducted jointly with the headteacher. Pupils' work in books was reviewed.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, pupils, four members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector spoke to eight parents on the playground and took into account eight responses, including six comments, to the online questionnaire, Parent View. One email from a parent was considered.
- A range of documents were looked at, including the school's information about pupils' achievement and records concerning pupils' attendance, behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Caroline Dulon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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