

St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Marsh Road, Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex CM0 8LZ

Inspection dates	28–29 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Effective leadership has ensured a team of staff who have improved the quality of education since the previous inspection.
- The vast majority of teaching is good and so pupils make good progress across the school.
- Teachers' feedback helps pupils to improve their work. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Governors are well informed and challenge leaders appropriately to improve outcomes for all pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in key stage 2 make similar progress to their peers because they get the help they need.
- Pupils understand British values and spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues very well. They are confident and ready to progress to the next stage of education by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils are well behaved and support each other to learn. They are polite, and enthusiastic about their school.
- Pupils feel safe. Adults provide strong care, guidance and support throughout the school.
- Children in the early years are happy and positive about learning. They make good progress and are prepared well for Year 1.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Checks on pupils' work do not always pick up gaps in learning. As a result, a few pupils do not progress as quickly as they could.
- Pupils do not get enough opportunities to improve their basic skills in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers plan regular opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills in subjects other than English and mathematics.

- Use assessment information well to ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress, by:
 - regularly checking on how well pupils are learning, and quickly intervening if their progress is not rapid enough
 - increasing the level of challenge for most-able pupils, so that their rates of progress in learning are even faster.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has worked well with other leaders to identify the school's strengths and areas for development. Robust action is taken to address weaknesses. Leaders have created a culture where staff are ambitious for all pupils.
- Since the previous inspection, leadership at all levels has improved. A leadership programme has helped leaders to take responsibility for reviewing practice and making changes needed. Middle leaders understand the strengths and areas for improvement for their subjects and make regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning that are generally effective. Consequently, leaders are more confident in leading their areas of responsibility and provide teachers with feedback that helps improve individual practice.
- All staff have detailed performance targets, which are regularly and robustly checked. Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training that has a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- The curriculum is effective and varied. Topics are carefully selected which engage pupils in learning about the wider world. Although writing is taught consistently well in subjects like science and religious education, there has been less emphasis on the development and assessment of subject-specific skills beyond English, mathematics and physical education.
- The school communicates its values well. These ideals underpin school plans and everyday practice. Pupils act as ambassadors to support each other's learning and to talk about how to improve. Class representatives are elected to meet together in the learning forum. This democratic process provides an effective example of British values.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs are met through a wide range of opportunities. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain. They are encouraged to participate in community activities, such as Burnham in Bloom, and in improving the local environment outside school. For example, the 'eco warriors' assist in collecting litter at weekends.
- School leaders commissioned a pupil premium funding review to check on how well this additional funding supports disadvantaged pupils. The funding is used effectively to improve the learning of disadvantaged pupils through activities such as the successful one-to-one teaching programmes. As a result, for these pupils, their progress and confidence have improved throughout the school.
- Leaders use the additional sports premium funding appropriately to enhance the provision of sport and physical education (PE). For example, in working closely with PE specialists from the local secondary school, teachers' expertise and subject knowledge has improved. More pupils take part in sports such as athletics and ball games.
- Leaders have made effective use of membership of a local partnership of schools. This provides shared challenge and support towards further improvement. For example, staff have worked collaboratively to check that teachers' assessment of pupils' work is accurate.
- The support offered by the local authority has increased the capacity of leaders to become self-sufficient in making changes and improving the school's performance. Leaders and governors have welcomed the rigour this support offers.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is effective. Following a review of governance, the membership of the governing body has been broadened so that governors have a wider range of skills. Governors now receive regular training and are supported well by the local authority. The governing body is effective in supporting and challenging school leaders to secure good outcomes for pupils and in checking that funding is used well.
 - Governors have a better understanding of the school. They are more confident in identifying further improvements needed, as a result of activities undertaken together with school leaders. For example, governors have taken part in scrutinies of pupils' work. As a result, there is now a shared understanding about expectations of pupils' progress; governors are better equipped to check that leaders' reports on pupils' progress are accurate.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a caring culture across all aspects of the school so that pupils are safe and happy. Leaders take safeguarding seriously and the majority of parents say that the school makes sure that their children are happy, safe and secure. School leaders provide workshops for parents on how to protect their children when they are using the internet.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **good**

- Teachers use their good subject knowledge and enthusiasm to sustain pupils' interest in learning. Pupils are engaged effectively and make good progress in most lessons.
- Pupils are supported well to develop skills to help them learn. For example, they are encouraged to take charge of their own learning, before asking the teacher for help, by remembering the school's preferred approach of the 'four Bs': 'brains, buddies, bits and bobs before asking the boss'.
- Staff make clear their expectations at the beginning of lessons. Adults constantly model and talk about what good learning looks like. Pupils value the discussions about their learning with other pupils who act as learning ambassadors in each class.
- A systematic approach to teaching phonics and better training for support staff has improved the teaching and outcomes in this aspect. Additional support from other adults has ensured better progress for key stage 2 pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers use a wide range of reading resources and plan opportunities for pupils to write for a variety of purposes. However, there are not always enough opportunities for pupils to develop their basic skills in subjects other than English.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge that has enabled them to support pupils in their understanding of the new mathematics curriculum. Real-life contexts are used to teach problem-solving, for example using shopping receipts. This encourages pupils to think more about the skills they are learning and how to apply those skills to different situations.
- Most teachers make sure that pupils know how to improve their work and use assessment information to plan pupils' next steps in learning. Regular feedback in lessons helps pupils to address any misconceptions. Occasionally, feedback in books is not followed up and so pupils' progress is not as rapid as it could be. This is particularly the case in mathematics.
- Teachers use support staff well to ensure that most pupils make good progress and that the specific learning requirements of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are met. Teachers use questions appropriately to extend pupils' learning. Pupils use carefully selected resources to develop specific skills. However, the effectiveness of interventions to help pupils who are making slower progress are not always checked carefully enough to see which are working well and what needs to be changed.
- Displays in classrooms and around the school are effective. Each class has prompts on displays to develop and encourage deeper thinking about different topics. Pupils say that the 'learning challenge boxes' help them to think of new ideas.
- Although leaders are developing the school's provision for the most able pupils, there is not always sufficient challenge to help this group of pupils to do as well as they could, particularly in mathematics. Teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation in mathematics books is not always high enough.
- Parents are encouraged to go into school to support their children's learning through 'magic Mondays', when they read and learn in the classroom alongside their children. Most parents feel that homework is appropriate, for the age of their children, and that it prepares them well for their future learning. For example, one parent said, 'We have been very happy (with the homework). My daughter always knows what to do.'

Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is good**

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Most parents feel that their children are safe, happy and secure in the school. Pupils agree that they feel safe. They value learning about e-safety and how to keep themselves safe, for example in using social media and the internet.
- The attendance of pupils has improved since the last inspection, so the attendance is slightly above that of other schools nationally. As a result of a focus on the attendance of vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils, the gap in attendance between these groups and other pupils in the school is closing. The school knows its children and families well. This has made the challenge of, and support for, parents whose children have poor attendance more successful. The few cases of persistent absence have been addressed appropriately.
- Pupils are encouraged to be responsible and to reflect on their actions as good citizens in the school and in the wider community. For example, participation in the town's Remembrance Day parade and holding a

themed international week have helped to broaden pupils' awareness of the part they play in the local and global community. The school has recently gained an outstanding award, as an International School, by the British Council.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They know about bullying and the various forms it takes. They say that there is very little bullying or poor behaviour in the school and, wherever this occurs, adults deal with it quickly.
- Pupils are polite, well-mannered and courteous. Parents support this view. This is as a result of the school's high expectations, calm atmosphere and the way adults behave with pupils and each other. Pupils are encouraged to discuss the values the school upholds. Consequently, they show respect for the opinions and ideas of others. The orderly environment contributes well to pupils' good behaviour across the school.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning have improved since the last inspection, as a result of the school's relentless focus on this aspect. Pupils work well together and understand that their good behaviour in the classroom has a positive effect on behaviour in the playground.
- Pupils are clear about the school's behaviour rewards and sanctions. Staff apply the behaviour policy consistently well and so behaviour around the school is good. Play and lunchtimes are supervised appropriately.
- Where individual pupils have specific social and emotional needs, the school is quick to put in place actions to protect and help pupils to improve their behaviour. For example, teachers work sensitively with these pupils about their preferences for seating and choice of support. This ensures that the actions taken match pupils' individual needs and helps them to learn successfully.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Leaders have secured further improvement in outcomes since the last inspection and pupils make good progress across the school.
- Results in the national phonics screening check, in Years 1 and 2, were above average in 2015. All pupils who did not achieve expected outcomes in their Year 1 phonics screening check, in 2014, achieved well in Year 2 in 2015. Leaders' checks on progress in reading, across all year groups, show that the teaching of reading is effective. Pupils feel confident and interested in reading and this has contributed to improved outcomes.
- Standards at the end of key stage 1 and 2, for reading, writing and mathematics, were broadly in line with national results in 2015. Progress from varying starting points was good for all pupils.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics in both key stages 1 and 2 has improved since the previous inspection. The gap between this group and their peers in the school and nationally is closing. There is some variation in the progress of disadvantaged pupils across different year groups. This reflects the specific challenges faced by individual pupils. The school is working effectively to support these pupils.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved since the last inspection. The range of support, and the skills of the additional adults who help them, has ensured that provision is targeted to specific needs. However, checks on the difference the support is making to pupils' progress are not made regularly enough. As a result, leaders are not always clear about which strategies are the most effective.
- While the school's own assessment information shows that the majority of most-able pupils often make good progress from their starting points, these pupils could achieve even more, particularly in mathematics.
- Progress information for the early years, and in key stages 1 and 2, shows that pupils are being prepared well for their next stage in education. They develop the knowledge and skills needed to continue to make good progress.

Early years provision

is good

- Effective leadership ensures that children are prepared well to start Year 1 by the end of the Reception Year. Teachers and other adults check regularly on how well children are doing and plan activities that help them to improve. Good opportunities enable children to develop, reinforce and practise their literacy and numeracy skills. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development is above that expected.
- The early years leader manages the provision very well, despite some challenging recruitment issues. Staff work together as an effective team, improving and refining the provision to match the needs and interests of individual children. As a result, children make good progress from their varying starting points.
- Well-considered adult and child-led learning activities engage children's interest and enthusiasm. Children choose activities with thought and care. Consequently, they are able to concentrate for increasingly long periods of time and are eager to show adults what they have explored.
- Adults improve children's vocabulary well. They are skilful in encouraging children to practise their speaking and listening skills. Their encouragement helps children to think about what they are learning and how much they understand.
- Parents regularly speak with the early years staff about their children's achievements. As a result, links between the school and home are developed effectively and teachers know how to use children's interests to help them to learn. An online system is due to be introduced, so that achievements at home and school can be more effectively and regularly shared. One parent said, 'I can't fault anything.'
- The outside area has been improved since the last inspection and was developed using the children's ideas. Different areas and activities provide opportunities for learning across the curriculum. During their time in imaginative play, children enjoy developing their physical skills, for example using a collection of tyres and shapes. They are particularly enthusiastic about the muddy play area.
- The behaviour of the children in the Reception class is good. Children are happy, safe and settle quickly. Leaders take their responsibility very seriously to ensure that the early years environment is secure. Parents are unanimous in their agreement that their children are happy and safe in the setting. As one parent said, 'It is absolutely brilliant. They come home happy and learn well.'
- Close links with nearby pre-school settings contribute to the good start that children make in the Reception Year. Children currently in the early years are writing a book to tell next year's children about the school. Some of them recently spoke about their experiences at the new children and parents' meeting. Year 1 pupils have also created a book about life in Year 1 that aims to support children who are preparing for the transition to Year 1 in September.

School details

Unique reference number	115159
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10011798

This inspection 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	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark North
Headteacher	Geraldine Denham-Hale
Telephone number	01621 782626
Website	www.stmarysschoolburnham.org.uk
Email address	admin@st-marys-burnham.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 March 2014

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is lower than for most schools.
- Most of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- There are seven classes, including a Reception class which children attend full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school provides a breakfast club for its pupils.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been considerable staff changes.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning during visits to all classes in the school, and often jointly with the headteacher. Observations were made of the provision of phonics for children in small groups.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. They also spoke informally to staff and pupils around the school.
- The team took account of the 51 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as looking at the school's own survey of parental opinion. Inspectors also considered seven questionnaires returned by staff, and the school's own pupil surveys.
- Inspectors checked a variety of documents, particularly those related to safeguarding, the school's evaluation of its performance, and records of pupils' progress and attainment.
- The team observed pupils in assembly, at breaktimes and lunchtimes, and around the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised samples of pupils' work in their books and on displays, and listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

Linda Bartlett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Rachel Welch

Ofsted Inspector

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