

Tickhill St Mary's Church of England Primary and Nursery School

St Mary's Road, Tickhill, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN11 9LZ

Inspection dates

2–3 November 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

- 'My child loves school and enjoys all aspects of the school day,' is a typical comment from the many parents who made their views known to an inspector.
- St Mary's has improved significantly since the previous inspection because of the strong leadership and the commitment and hard work of the staff team. Everyone is united in their desire to provide the very best for pupils at St Mary's.
- Pupils are proud of their school. Most pupils behave very well and say that they feel safe and well looked after.
- This is a school that fosters pupils' personal and social skills well. For example, weekly 'Musketeer Awards' are presented to pupils who show a caring and sharing attitude towards others.
- Governors are well informed. They are very supportive of the school. They also challenge senior leaders skilfully and check carefully that pupils will benefit from new developments.
- Children get off to a swift start to their learning in the early years. They particularly enjoy working in the school's woodland area on 'Welly Wednesday'.
- The quality of teaching is typically good at every key stage.
- Most pupils make good progress in every subject. However, some pupils could do even better, particularly the most able pupils.
- Special events in the school's calendar help create a sense of community. For example, at Christmas time, Year 6 pupils lead the Reception children through Tickhill to 'follow the star' to the crib scene. In the summer, every class in school enters the local horticultural show.
- Senior leaders and governors are not precise enough in their planning. Targets to improve the outcomes of the most able pupils and to further improve the quality of teaching lack precision. As a result, a few inconsistencies remain from class to class.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Help all pupils, particularly the most able pupils, make even better progress in every subject, by:
 - planning the school’s priorities more precisely, particularly with regard to improving the outcomes of the most able pupils and improving the remaining pockets of less effective teaching
 - providing more rigorous and precise support to bring all teaching quickly to the standard of the very best
 - ensuring that expectations in every class are equally high in all subjects across the curriculum and help pupils foster an in-depth understanding of their work and inspire them to do their very best.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and assistant headteachers provide strong leadership. They have a clear view of the school's strengths and aspects in need of further improvement and have harnessed the support of the staff team successfully in their drive. Staff responses to the inspection questionnaire about the school were all entirely positive.
- Many parents typically refer to the 'warm, caring and supportive atmosphere' in the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well. Pupils are encouraged to be thoughtful and reflective. The school actively promotes aspects of diversity, by celebrating 'Gypsy/Roma Traveller Month' and 'Black History Month', for example.
- Discrimination is not tolerated and the school does all it can to try and ensure that all pupils benefit from all the school has to offer. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. British values are brought alive as they are linked closely to the pupils' own experiences and work in different subjects. For example, pupils learn about the importance of 'individual liberty' through their work on the second world war. They gain a good understanding of democratic processes when they elect their own school councillors.
- Plans for improvement focus on the right issues. Senior leaders have successfully improved the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. They have achieved this despite having to induct a large number of new staff over the past two years. Nevertheless, a few inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress remain. Current plans are not sharply focused enough on the particular aspects in need of further improvement, in order to bring all teaching to the standard of the very best and to ensure that all pupils, particularly the most able, do as well as they can.
- Senior leaders keep a careful check on how well each pupil is learning in the classroom and how much progress the pupils make. Performance management procedures are linked closely to pupils' outcomes and whole-school priorities. Staff are reflective about their own practice. They readily work together to explore how they can help pupils do even better.
- Staff take the lead on aspects of the school's work. Subject leaders provide termly reports for governors, which evaluate the impact of actions taken.
- Most parents who made their views known to an inspector consider that they are kept well informed about matters at school. Many parents agreed that any concerns they might have are dealt with swiftly by staff at school. The school runs termly parents' forum meetings to help ensure that parents keep up to date with current school initiatives, such as those relating to the changes in the mathematics curriculum, homework and anti-bullying.
- Pupil premium funding is used to provide both academic and pastoral support. As a result, disadvantaged pupils typically do better than other pupils nationally, relative to their individual starting points.

- The primary physical education and sport premium funding is used well. All Year 6 pupils have been trained as playground leaders to help keep everyone active and fit during breaktimes. Staff have received additional training, which has improved the teaching of gymnastics. The funding has also helped raise the profile of sporting activities in school. Pupils take part in a wider range of inter-school competitions, such as in basketball, orienteering and dance. Children in the early years enjoy 'Fitness Friday' each week. They keep fit and active and also grow their own fruit and vegetables, which helps them learn about how to have a healthy lifestyle.
- The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. The school endeavours to provide many special events, such as educational visits and visitors to school, to motivate pupils to learn when they start a new topic.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities, ranging from street dance and urban gymnastics to film club and singing in the choir.
- The local authority has provided effective support, which has helped strengthen leadership and governance and also helped to foster partnerships with other schools in the locality.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and improvement priorities. They have the necessary skills to support the school, but also to hold school leaders to account and regularly check the impact that additional funding has on pupils' outcomes.
- Governors do not just rely on what they are told by senior leaders. They visit the school regularly, talk with pupils and representatives from the local authority and canvass the views of parents, so they can check the impact of new developments for themselves.
- Governors have played a key role in the improvements made since the previous inspection. They have ensured that funding has been allocated towards expanding the senior leadership team and towards improving pupils' outcomes through the role of the 'Rocketeer' teachers.
- Governors are knowledgeable about pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching. They help to ensure that performance management arrangements lead to improved provision and outcomes.
- Governors bring a wide range of skills and expertise in areas such as finance, safeguarding, education, special educational needs, recruitment and human resources. They also have strong links with the local community and the Church.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils' safety and welfare are given a high priority. To this end, the school has more recently developed a pastoral team to ensure that this work is well coordinated.
- Leaders ensure that staff receive up-to-date training. Procedures are adhered to by staff and checked regularly by governors.

- The school arranges for an annual safeguarding review to check that its procedures are effective and continue to meet statutory requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Evidence from pupils' work books throughout school from this term and last year, the school's own records and observations of teaching and learning show that the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching is typically good now and it is sometimes even better.
- Senior leaders are particularly strong role models in the classroom.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge across most subjects of the curriculum. Most lessons have a clear focus. Teachers generally use assessment information well to pitch work at a good level of challenge. Teachers and teaching assistants often check what pupils know, understand and can do and move them on to more thought-provoking work when they are ready. Nevertheless, senior leaders are aware that expectations are too low for the most able pupils in some classes.
- Some lessons successfully capture pupils' interests and motivate them to try their very best. For example, during the inspection, key stage 2 pupils were thoroughly engaged in trying to estimate how many elephants they would be able to fit into their school hall. Adults in the class asked probing questions, which got the pupils thinking very hard. Pupils first estimated how many elephants would fit in and then grappled with finding out how they could test and justify their answers. However, pupils are not as engaged in all lessons and some become a little bored or restless when they do not find their work as stimulating.
- Pupils in key stage 2 benefit from the additional support provided by the 'Rocketeer' teachers. They check carefully how they can help pupils catch up with their learning and how they can help the most able pupils do even better.
- In some classes, adults know the particular requirements of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities well. This enables adults to adapt their approach when supporting individuals and small groups to ensure that these pupils work as well as they can.
- The teaching of writing has improved. Pupils have plenty of opportunity to talk about their work before they start writing. This is helping improve the quality of pupils' writing because pupils have time to develop their ideas and enhance their vocabulary prior to writing.
- The teaching of spelling, grammar and punctuation and phonics is more rigorous and regular than at the time of the previous inspection. This is helping pupils, including the most and least able read and write with greater accuracy and fluency. There is some very strong teaching of reading, which is helping to improve pupils' comprehension skills as they grapple with their understanding of more complex and thought-provoking texts.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving. A greater emphasis on learning through reasoning and problem-solving activities is helping pupils to gain a more thorough grounding in new mathematical skills and concepts. For example, pupils in key stage 1

explored how many different ways they could represent the calculation 'three multiplied by five'. In doing so, many showed a good understanding of key mathematical calculations, including inverse operations.

- Although there is some very strong teaching in the school, senior leaders are aware that not all teaching matches the standard of the very best. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough in every class, nor in every subject. In a few lessons, less is demanded of the most able pupils, in particular. In these lessons, teachers and teaching assistants do not successfully foster an in-depth understanding of new learning to the same extent. The work provided does not interest or challenge pupils as much, so they are not so inspired to try their very best.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe. They are aware of the potential risks when using computers. Pupils who spoke to an inspector said that they were confident they would find an adult in school to help them if they had any concerns.
- Pastoral support is strong. The school keeps a sharp check on pupils' well-being. Records show that the school is vigilant in following up any alleged incidents or concerns. Pupils are given additional support when faced with having to cope with difficult life issues.
- The vast majority of parents who made their views known to an inspector are very supportive of the school and fully satisfied with the level of care provided. Nevertheless, some parents expressed some concerns, particularly concerning how effectively the school deals with incidents of bullying and/or poorer behaviour. These concerns were explored thoroughly. No other evidence emerged during the inspection to suggest that the school does not deal effectively with such incidents.
- Pupils who spoke to an inspector said that they did not think bullying was a problem in school. These pupils were very reflective in their responses. A group of older pupils said that sometimes pupils 'fall out with their friends', but that they did not consider this to be bullying.
- The school has formed an anti-bullying squad to help highlight the effects of bullying and to tell pupils what to do if they think they are being bullied. An anti-bullying week is held each year to ensure that the key messages are continually reinforced. A parents' forum helped review the anti-bullying policy. The school has recently received the Anti-Bullying Alliance's silver award in recognition of its work to combat bullying.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school. For example, they are keen to represent their school by singing in the school choir or as part of the 'Meet and Greet' team. Older pupils explained that they are keen to be good role models.
- Attendance has been above average since the previous inspection and this reflects

pupils' enjoyment of school life.

- Pupils respond well to the school's behaviour management procedures. They like to please adults in school and have been directly involved in designing the awards given for working hard and behaving well.
- Pupils are polite and conduct themselves well in and around school. Pupils who spoke to an inspector said that they think most pupils behave well in school most of the time.
- Pupils are typically caring and considerate of the needs of others. Older pupils readily look after the younger children when they start school and this helps them to settle in well.
- Most pupils have a good understanding of how to be a successful learner. Pupils work well with others in the class and most work is well presented. Most pupils are keen to do well and most respond immediately to instructions from adults. Pupils are curious, reflect thoughtfully about their work and show resilience when they find the work hard. Nevertheless, some pupils resort to off-task behaviour at times. A few pupils lose their concentration at times and do not always try their best with their work. This is usually if they do not find their work challenging or interesting enough. However, they do not usually distract others from learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils are now making better progress because the quality of teaching has improved. Several classes faced some changes in teaching staff following the previous inspection and this led to some inconsistencies in progress at times. However, senior leaders did all they could to minimise any negative impact on pupils.
- The work in pupils' books and the school's own performance information show that most pupils in most year groups make good progress, relative to their starting points.
- The school has addressed the recommendation from the previous inspection successfully to improve achievement in writing. Pupils' writing is mostly well structured and grammatically correct.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check was above that found nationally in 2015 and 2016. Pupils' improving knowledge of the sounds that letters represent is helping them to enjoy reading from an early age. Pupils' vocabulary and comprehension skills have improved, particularly in upper key stage 2. By the end of school, most pupils are able to read and understand more complex texts confidently.
- In 2016, all pupils attained the expected standard by the end of Year 6 in mathematics, writing, English grammar, punctuation and spelling, and science. Almost every pupil attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined. This was much better than the national picture.
- All in all, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Achievement across many subjects of the curriculum is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. Pupils achieve well across the curriculum. For example, the opportunity to conduct many hands-on activities in science is helping them do well. Music is also given a high priority. The school choir performs at a range

of venues and is just about to produce its own Christmas CD.

- The number of disadvantaged pupils varies significantly from year to year. This makes comparisons of the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils from one year to the next difficult. However, the school keeps a sharp check on each individual pupil and carefully identifies any potential difficulties they may face. The work in pupils' books, the school's assessment information and published performance data show that disadvantaged pupils typically make better progress than other pupils nationally.
- The quality of pupils' writing in subjects such as history, geography and science is sometimes of the same high standard as in their discrete English lessons in some classes. However, in a few classes, expectations of what pupils can achieve are not equally high in all subjects.
- The most able pupils, including those who are also disadvantaged, are typically challenged well in lessons. In 2016, more pupils achieved a high standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined than did so nationally. Nevertheless, senior leaders acknowledge that some of the school's most able pupils could still do even better. A legacy of some inconsistent teaching means that some pupils still have some catching up to do to reach their full potential.

Early years provision

Good

- Strong leadership has enabled the early years to continue to improve since the previous inspection. By the end of the early years, children are ready to start Year 1.
- Staff work hard to ensure that, as far as possible, the activities they provide stem from the children's own interests. For example, in their current work about different stories, staff ask parents to let them know which books and stories the children enjoy.
- Teaching is typically good. Staff assess regularly what children know, understand and can do. They adapt the activities to help children learn more effectively.
- Special days and events are incorporated into the weekly timetable and these are helping to promote an enthusiasm for learning among the children. For example, children gain a lot from learning outdoors in the school woodland area on 'Welly Wednesdays'.
- During the inspection, children had good fun learning outdoors. They carefully observed the different leaves, sorted them according to the different colours and considered why so many leaves were falling from the trees. They decided to make witches' brooms from sticks they found and used these to develop their own imaginative stories about the witch in the book they had been reading.
- The safety and well-being of the children are given a high priority. Relationships and positive welfare arrangements are thorough and children behave well. Children know how to behave safely and take measured risks in the classroom and also when they are learning outdoors. For example, during the inspection, children were very careful when handling large sticks outdoors and this ensured that no one was hurt in the process.
- Partnerships with parents, providers and other agencies are strong. Many parents who made their views known to an inspector were very appreciative about their child's start to school life. Parents typically commented that staff in the early years 'go above and

beyond to make sure their children settle well into school', and that they are 'delighted with the school and are very happy we chose to send our child to St Mary's'.

- Most children make good progress in the early years, relative to their starting points. The proportion of children reaching levels that are broadly typical for their age has been above that found nationally since the previous inspection.
- The use of additional funding is enabling disadvantaged children to progress just as well as or better than other children nationally.
- Children's starting points when they enter the school vary from year to year due to the differing make-up of each year group. When they enter the school, children's knowledge and skills are generally in line with those typical for their age in most areas of learning. However, this is not always the case, because some year groups have a considerable number of children with higher skills.
- The school is aware that while most children make good progress, some of the learning activities are not challenging enough for the most able children in the class. The staff team is currently focused on providing some more challenging and stimulating activities to help the most able children in the early years do even better.

School details

Unique reference number	106777
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10019707

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gareth Rowbotham
Headteacher	Janet Sanderson
Telephone number	01302 742569
Website	www.tickhillstmarys.co.uk
Email address	admin@tickhill-st-marys.doncaster.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 November 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is below average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or with an education, health and care plan.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Most of the teaching staff have changed since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a range of subjects and heard pupils read.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, in the playground and around school.
- Discussions were held with pupils, senior leaders, staff, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- A number of documents were examined. They included the school's view of its own performance, records of the checks made on teaching and learning, the school improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents through informal discussions with parents during the inspection, a telephone conversation with a parent, analysis of the school's own questionnaire to parents and the 73 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View.
- The 12 responses from staff to the inspection questionnaire about the school were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

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