

St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Brampton Road, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire LE13 0NA

Inspection dates

21–22 March 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Senior leaders have not been quick enough to prioritise and take action against all of the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection.
- Leaders' plans for improvement are not as sharp as they need to be. They lack the precision necessary to ensure that they are effective in securing change.
- Governors have not been tenacious enough in challenging the school's leaders about pupils' outcomes.
- The quality of teaching and learning in key stages 1 and 2 is not consistently good. Too often, the most able pupils do not make enough progress in lessons because they are not challenged.
- Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Pupils do not make as much progress as they should in key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Too often, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is too low.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders and governors have established stability and instilled a culture of ambition. Staff morale is high and this is helping to accelerate improvements.
- Children in the early years get off to a good start. They make rapid progress due to the quick identification of their needs and actions to address them.
- Pupils' behaviour and conduct in the classroom and around the school are consistently good and sometimes exemplary.
- Pupils' writing is improving faster than other subjects. Teachers give pupils many opportunities to write at length in a range of subjects.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide effective support for lower- and middle-achieving pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well. Pupils have the potential to make good citizens of the future.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better, thereby accelerating the progress of all pupils, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils and the most able, by ensuring that:
 - teachers and teaching assistants raise their expectations of what pupils of all abilities and backgrounds can and should achieve
 - teachers improve their accuracy in identifying the next steps in pupils' learning so that work is consistently challenging, particularly for the most able pupils
 - teachers provide pupils with more frequent opportunities to develop problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - school improvement planning is more precise in identifying those responsible and timescales, along with measurable milestones, and places greater emphasis on improving the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and the most able
 - the governing body provides more robust challenge to school leaders about the performance of different groups of pupils.
- Improve pupils' welfare and their chances of success by ensuring that all groups of pupils attend school regularly, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

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

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management should be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not yet good. Leaders and the governors have not been quick enough to secure the improvements identified by the last inspection as being needed.
- Leaders have not been accurate enough in identifying the actions needed to improve the school and deciding which have the highest priority.
- School development planning does not identify focused targets and measures of success in order to accurately gauge the impact of actions to improve the quality of teaching and rates of pupils' progress. As a result, pupils' outcomes have not improved as quickly as they need to.
- There have been many new appointments to staffing, leadership and to the governing body since the last inspection. The new leadership team is increasingly cohesive. Since her appointment in September 2016, the new headteacher has worked hard with governors and the academy trust to establish a stable staffing structure in order to support school improvement.
- The trust has supported the school in the recruitment of staff and leaders, and has worked with the school to support the development of the new leadership team. Leaders demonstrate the capacity for sustained improvement because there are many indications that standards are beginning to improve. This is reflected in the improving quality of pupils' work, particularly in writing. Many initiatives are, however, at an early stage of development.
- Leaders recognise that assessment is not yet sufficiently accurate and are providing staff training and opportunities for teachers to share their practice with other schools in the cluster and the trust. Teachers have worked together, for example to assess pupils' work in order to moderate and improve the accuracy of their assessments of pupils' achievement. Consequently, the accuracy of assessment is rapidly improving.
- Newly appointed middle leaders have a growing understanding of their areas of responsibility. They have received training through the local cluster group of schools as well as through the trust. The English and mathematics subject leaders, for example, liaise with other subject leaders in the network of local schools, sharing expertise. They have carried out actions to monitor and evaluate standards to improve assessment practices and support improvements to the quality of teaching.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and often stimulating. Pupils in key stage 2 described with relish their experience of dissecting hearts in science to develop their understanding of parts of the body. Such opportunities help many groups of pupils to make progress.

- The school places emphasis on pupils' musical development and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development and awareness effectively. The 'Mandarin project', for example, involved visits from a local specialist who taught pupils across the school about this Chinese language as well as giving them insight into Chinese culture. Such work helps promote pupils' understanding of British values and prepare them for life in modern Britain.
- The very large majority of parents spoken to by inspectors were pleased with the education offered to their children. Many parents commented very positively on improvements made since the appointment of the new headteacher. Middle leaders and staff referred to improved communications within the school and improved staff morale.
- The school's special educational needs coordinator, who also serves as the deputy headteacher and early years leader, has a clear overview of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school rapidly identifies when interventions are needed and pupils' progress is carefully reviewed. As a result, this group of pupils is taught well and makes good progress overall.
- Leaders use the additional funds provided through the primary physical education and sport premium grant effectively. This has improved the skills of teachers in delivering lessons and raised pupils' participation rates by increasing the range of sporting activities on offer.
- The use of pupil premium funding is beginning to be used effectively but is not sufficiently targeted or linked robustly to educational outcomes in order to have greater impact on the progress of disadvantaged pupils.

Governance

- The chair and vice-chair of the governing body were both appointed during the current academic year and governors are still gaining an accurate understanding of the school. The governors' understanding of pupils' progress and attainment is not as good as it needs to be to enable them to hold the school's leaders fully to account.
- Governors have benefited from the training opportunities they have received from the trust which has helped to develop the effectiveness of the governing body. The governing body and the trust are ambitious for the future of the school and for each pupil. The governors know the school well through regular visits and are very supportive of the leadership team. They understand the importance of working with parents. They have supported the recruitment and development of an increasingly effective leadership team and have worked closely with the headteacher to support the recruitment of teachers and staff.
- The governing body has a secure understanding of its responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. It questions the school's work to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils well, but does not challenge leaders rigorously enough about the outcomes of this group of pupils, the most able pupils or the most able disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective and leaders ensure that statutory requirements are met. Leaders make sure that all staff are fully trained in keeping pupils safe. Adults are aware of, and vigilant for, signs of extremism and different forms of abuse including female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation. Staff recruitment and vetting procedures are rigorous. There is an effective culture of safeguarding and care which is supported by the very positive role models of leaders and staff.
- Some minor errors in the school's single central record were identified and remedied during the inspection, and the school's records are compliant. Parents who spoke to inspectors were confident that staff are committed to pupils' well-being and safety.
- The designated safeguarding leads work effectively with external agencies when this is required and pursue the right actions to ensure pupils' welfare.
- Through the curriculum and regular themed assemblies, for example about the use of the internet, water safety or with visitors from the NSPCC, the school teaches pupils how to stay safe in a variety of situations. Pupils trust adults in the school to deal with any concerns quickly and effectively.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching and learning in key stages 1 and 2 are not consistently good. Teachers do not consistently have high enough expectations of, or match work consistently well to, the abilities of different pupils.
- Teachers are not consistent in moving pupils on in their learning to deepen their understanding as soon as they are ready, particularly the most able. Sometimes the work set for the most able pupils is too easy and so these pupils do not make good progress.
- In mathematics, pupils do not have frequent enough opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. The most able pupils sometimes spend too long practising a skill which they have already mastered rather than developing higher levels of understanding.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are proficient at teaching phonics. Phonics is taught using a calm, well-organised and structured approach with appropriate tasks provided to meet the needs of the different abilities of pupils. The majority of pupils enjoy reading and are able to use their early reading skills to attempt unfamiliar words.
- The introduction of school 'reading challenges' and a more systematic approach to guided reading have contributed to improvements in pupils' attitudes and standards in reading. Pupils across the school are increasingly motivated to read at school and at home. A boy in Year 6, for example, shared his enthusiasm for reading and writing with an inspector in relation to a class novel 'Holes', describing how he had used his inference and deduction skills to plan and write the next section of a story.
- There is now greater consistency in the feedback teachers provide to pupils on their work. The feedback aligns with the school's policy and is a priority of the school development plan.

- The implementation of the school's handwriting policy is evident. The work in pupils' writing books is well presented. Pupils develop and deepen their writing skills by writing for extended periods and in different areas of the curriculum. This is helping the majority of pupils to make increasingly strong progress although this is not always consistent.
- Teaching assistants and volunteers provide effective support, particularly for low- and middle-achieving pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Occasionally, the impact of this support is less effective in meeting the needs of pupils who require more challenge to help them make progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is in the lowest 10% nationally. The school is implementing a range of actions to address this including the procurement of an attendance officer. However, this has not yet improved the rate of attendance for this group.
- Parents and pupils say that the school is a safe place to learn. They agree that incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils know what to do if they are worried. The school maintains sound records of incidents, actions taken and the outcomes. Leaders are working to develop even greater rigour in analysing and addressing potential trends and patterns, and reporting more effectively to governors.
- The work to promote pupils' personal development is effective. Pupils have opportunities to learn about other faiths and customs through religious education, the arts, music and topic work. The school is successful in promoting a strong emphasis on tolerance and respect for others, regardless of their culture, family background or religious beliefs. Pupils in Year 6 spoke very eloquently about how gender stereotyping should be challenged and not limit future opportunities. The school helps prepare pupils well for life in modern, democratic Britain.
- Pupils have a good sense of personal and social responsibility. Pupils told inspectors how they valued and enjoyed the roles of responsibility the school offers them, whether it be the school council or as 'eco-warriors', litter pickers or playtime leaders.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders have been successful in developing the school's '123 magic' behaviour system, which is applied consistently in all year groups and throughout the school day. Pupils understand expectations for behaviour very well and are confident that staff will address any instances of poor behaviour. Pupils' conduct around the school and at different times of the day is consistently good and sometimes exemplary. Pupils are courteous and thoughtful towards each other, adults and visitors to the school.

- Pupils in most classes are enthusiastic and eager to learn, apply themselves well to tasks set and persevere to do their best even when teaching is not well matched to their abilities. Pupils are confident, offering contributions and sharing their ideas in lessons. They work well together when given opportunities to do so.
- Pupils understand British values and there is a culture and ethos of respect in the school which is promoted by all staff and reflected in the attitudes of pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because there are inconsistencies in rates of progress for groups of pupils. The progress of higher-attaining pupils, particularly in mathematics, is slower than that of other pupils.
- In 2016, pupils made slower progress in reading and writing than that seen nationally. In too many instances, pupils who left the early years or key stage 1 at the expected, and above the expected, levels of attainment did not make good progress in key stage 2.
- Disadvantaged pupils did not achieve as well as other pupils nationally in 2016. The school is working to address this, for example through the creation of the role of staff 'advocates' to support the confidence and well-being of pupils. However, targets are not sufficiently precise in terms of attainment and progress. There are some signs of improvement but more focused work is needed to bring about more rapid improvements in the achievement of these pupils.
- School assessment information for writing shows that many pupils are currently working below the expectations for their age. Pupils' work in their books shows that there are improvements in the standard of writing. However, this is not consistent in all classes.
- Teachers apply the school's calculation policy and pupils make good progress in developing their calculation methods in mathematics. While there are some examples of pupils making improved progress in developing problem-solving skills, this is not consistent in all classes. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their reasoning skills or to make mathematical generalisations.
- Children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 are increasingly using their phonics skills to read well. However, reading skills for disadvantaged pupils are not always solidly embedded. Some disadvantaged pupils lacked confidence in applying their phonetic knowledge in key stage 1 and sometimes in using their comprehension skills in key stage 2.
- Most pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils. In many lessons, inspectors observed effective and well-planned support and interventions to support pupils who found learning difficult.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make a good start to their education in the early years. Children enter the early years at levels of development that are below those typically seen in children of their age. As a result of good teaching, children of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress from their starting points.
- The early years leader, who is also the class teacher, has a very clear vision and understanding of good early years practice. Early intervention quickly equips children with the learning skills they need to be able to access the early years curriculum. The children quickly adapt to new and effective routines that promote their learning and development.
- Leaders have identified the areas of development that are typically weakest for children entering the school, and are aware that achievement in reading and writing is still lower than that seen nationally. The early years leader is developing closer working with linked pre-school settings to improve transition arrangements. Good teaching and well-planned interventions are supporting children to make good progress in these areas.
- Clear learning themes run through carefully planned indoor and outdoor provision, allowing children to successfully build on their skills, knowledge and understanding throughout each day. Pupils are lively and inquisitive learners who are keen to talk about their work. In a phonics lesson, pupils decoded and blended words linked to a topic while a teaching assistant made assessment notes about the children's learning. The children were motivated, interested and engaged by this challenging work. They often focus on activities for increasingly extended periods of time and without direct supervision. This is helping children to challenge themselves and is building their resilience as learners.
- Assessments are regular and help to monitor how each individual child is doing. The information in children's 'learning journey' development records captures their progress and provides useful information for parents. Teachers encourage parents to play an active role in their child's development. Parents value highly the good communication between the school and home.
- The additional pupil premium funding is used well to ensure that eligible children make good progress from their individual starting points.
- The safety and well-being of children is well managed and the early years welfare arrangements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	139194
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10019575

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust
Chair	Stephen Cooper
Headteacher	Louisa Morris
Telephone number	01664 562 500
Website	www.st-marys-school.co.uk
Email address	head@st-maryscofe.leics.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 September 2014

Information about this school

- St Mary’s Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in single- and mixed-age classes.
- The school became a sponsored academy on 1 March 2013 and is part of the Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust. This is the school’s second inspection since becoming an academy.
- The school is part of a network of local schools. This partnership supports training, staff development and leadership across the network.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language are well below the national average. The proportion of girls compared with boys is higher than the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.

- In 2016, the school met the government's floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website. The school complies with the Department for Education's guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all year groups. Some lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors observed the teaching of early reading skills and listened to pupils reading. Inspectors talked to pupils about their school and looked at examples of their work, sometimes jointly with middle leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, and representatives of the governing body and the academy trust. Discussions explored a wide range of subjects, including safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents including the school's own self-evaluation of current performance and plans for improvement, information relating to the safeguarding of pupils, the school's most recent information on the achievement and progress of pupils and the school's most recent information relating to the attendance of pupils.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the start of the school day. They took account of the 20 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

John Lawson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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