

St Andrew's CofE VA Primary School

Ecton Brook Road, Ecton Brook, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN3 5EN

Inspection dates

17–18 May 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	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not been wholly successful in bringing about the necessary improvements since the previous inspection. The school is not improving quickly enough.
- Governors have not been tenacious enough in challenging the school's leaders about pupils' outcomes.
- The quality of teaching and learning is not consistently good. Too often, the most able pupils do not make enough progress in lessons because they are insufficiently challenged.
- Pupils do not make as much progress as they should in some classes because too often teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low.
- The good teaching practice that is already evident in the school is not shared more widely with staff to improve their teaching.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are not clear about the part they need to play in improving outcomes.
- Not all teachers encourage pupils to check the accuracy of their spelling, punctuation and grammar when they write.
- The checks carried out by leaders are not always targeted sharply enough or revisited in a timely manner to ensure that improvements have been made.
- Pupils are not provided with work in subjects other than English and mathematics that excites, interests or motivates them as much as it could.
- The early years requires improvement. Staff have not used assessments of children's learning well enough to ensure that all children make good progress from their starting points.

The school has the following strengths

- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel safe. The school's inclusion team is tenacious and provides sensitive, effective support for pupils and their families.
- There is a developing culture for improvement shared by leaders, staff and pupils. Leaders are ambitious for pupils in the school.
- Pupils enjoy school. The majority behave well and follow clear rules and expectations.
- Relationships are positive. This is a caring, nurturing, inclusive school.
- There has been year-on-year improvement in phonics and in outcomes in the early years since the last inspection.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school, including the early years, to bring about more rapid progress of all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and the most able, by ensuring that:
 - 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 and teaching assistants raise their expectations of what pupils of all abilities and backgrounds can and should achieve so that more reach their potential
 - teachers follow the school's policy to require pupils to check the accuracy of their grammar, punctuation and spelling to further develop their writing across the curriculum.
- Make sure that leaders at all levels drive forward school improvement by:
 - ensuring that the school improvement plan action points are communicated effectively, so that all staff have a clearer understanding of priorities and the part they need to play in raising standards
 - ensuring that monitoring and evaluation of learning are sharply focused, and outcomes are used effectively to drive up improvement
 - providing opportunities to share existing good practice with teachers and teaching assistants in the school
 - ensuring that the actions from the recent pupil premium and early years reviews are fully embedded
 - ensuring that the governing body provides more robust challenge to school leaders about the performance of different groups of pupils
 - ensuring that the curriculum provides interesting themes for pupils to study, which capture their interest and imagination.

An external review of governance 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

- Leadership and management require improvement because not all of the necessary improvements identified at the previous inspection have been made quickly or extensively enough.
- The absence of the headteacher and other teachers for a period of time, coupled with changes to staff and staffing arrangements, have prevented leaders from securing sustained improvement. Leaders and staff are now taking concerted and decisive action, but many initiatives are recent and are not yet fully embedded.
- Leaders have formulated appropriate plans of action to drive forward improvements in the school. However, not all staff have the necessary understanding of what leaders' priorities are or the part they need to play to help secure and embed the appropriate changes and actions required.
- Leaders know where the most effective teaching practice lies in the school because they check what is happening through a range of activities such as lesson observations, scrutiny of work and analysis of data. However, the focus of this work is sometimes too broad and is not targeted precisely enough on what needs to be improved. As a result, outcomes are not sharp enough to secure rapid improvement.
- Leaders' assessment of the quality of teaching is too positive. Leaders provide feedback to staff but do not always give precise indications of what needs to be improved. This prevents teachers and teaching assistants from having a realistic view of their work. In addition, identified weaknesses are not always followed up quickly or robustly enough. As a result, inconsistencies are not always tackled with sufficient urgency, which slows down the pace of change.
- Middle leaders are keen and enthusiastic and have a growing understanding of their areas of responsibility. They have received suitable training and work closely with several schools in the locality to share ideas and expertise. For instance, the early years team is working with a local school that has outstanding early years provision to help bring about further improvements in Reception.
- Middle leaders are clear about what needs to be improved and are determined to support senior leaders in bringing about the required changes. Some opportunities have been provided for them to check out what is happening in school and to support teachers but these have not been regular or sharply focused enough. There is some good practice in the school, but this is not shared widely enough.
- Until recently, the additional pupil premium funding was not used well enough to support this group of pupils and improve their outcomes. This was highlighted by a local authority review of the school at the beginning of 2017. Following the recommendations of the pupil premium review, leaders are now implementing a plan of action to better meet the needs of this group. However, there is a legacy of underachievement among these pupils. Although progress is being made, it is very recent.
- Leaders use the additional funding for physical education and sports effectively. This has improved teachers' skills in delivering lessons and raised pupils' participation rates

by increasing the range of sporting activities on offer. Some of these are innovative. For example, pupils enjoyed competing in the 'Junior Strictly' dancing competition where they competed against a number of other schools in Northampton.

- The school's special educational needs coordinator has a clear overview of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. She ensures that funding is used efficiently and effectively. The school rapidly identifies when interventions are needed, and pupils' progress is carefully reviewed. As a result, this group of pupils are taught well and make good progress overall.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and all areas of the national curriculum are covered. However, many themes and activities presented do not extend, interest or challenge pupils. Leaders know this. The curriculum is being revised to provide more interesting and motivating themes for pupils, which are designed to capture their interest and imagination.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils learn how to be responsible citizens through their personal, social and health education lessons and through reflective, collective worship. Although pupils learn about other faiths and cultures such as Judaism, Sikhism and Hinduism, this is at a basic level.
- The very large majority of parents spoken with by inspectors or who completed the online questionnaire are pleased with the education on offer to their children. One parent wrote, 'St Andrew's always has a very positive atmosphere. The school is welcoming and the staff helpful. My son loves going to school!'
- Support from the local authority has been patchy because there have been frequent changes in school adviser. However, support and challenge have moved on apace since January 2017. A review of the school led to an externally commissioned pupil premium review. The local authority also brokered support for the early years team. These actions are helping to secure improvement.

Governance of the school

- Since the last inspection, the governing body has been reviewed and, as a result, a new chair and vice-chair of governors have been appointed.
- Governors are gaining an accurate view of the school. Although they have an increased understanding of pupils' progress and attainment, it is not as good as it needs to be to hold the leaders fully to account, especially on the performance of different groups such as the most able or disadvantaged pupils.
- The governing body is committed to the school. Governors find things out for themselves in a variety of ways and take seriously their responsibilities for areas such as safeguarding and financial probity. Minutes of governing body and sub-committee meetings show that they are challenging school leaders by asking more searching questions.
- Governors have a clear understanding and undertake their duties well in ensuring that safeguarding is effective. Governors also understand how the pupil premium and the physical education and sports funding are used. However, their knowledge of the impact on pupils' outcomes is not as strong nor as timely as it should be in order for

them to hold leaders fully to account.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There are clear and robust systems and procedures in place which are understood by all staff. Leaders keep detailed records to inform effective and timely work with external agencies. Staff and governors receive relevant training and updates, including on radicalisation and extremism.
- The culture of safeguarding in the school is evident in that pupils feel safe, and parents are confident that their children are safe and the school cares well for them. One parent wrote, 'The teachers are caring and value each individual to challenge and to bring out the most in them.'
- Pupils confidently explain about ways in which the school helps them to learn to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils told inspectors that they learn about internet safety, including how to block people on the internet.
- Case studies and records show that vulnerable children and their families are well supported. Governors and school leaders recognise the need to support the welfare of all pupils, hence the high level of investment in provision, including a family support worker and learning mentor. Leaders are quick to follow up on any concerns and to check this against information on assessment and attendance, to then put in place appropriate interventions. The inclusion team is willing to have challenging discussions with parents and outside agencies, while building effective relationships with families to achieve sustainable improvements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is inconsistent across the school. This inhibits pupils from making at least good progress over time in reading, writing and mathematics. The quality of teaching has not improved enough since the last inspection.
- Progress in some classes is slower because teachers and teaching assistants do not routinely provide enough challenge to make sure that pupils of all abilities make rapid progress. Teachers across the school do not consistently use assessment well enough to inform their planning for the next steps in learning for pupils, especially for disadvantaged pupils and the most able.
- Some teachers are providing more demanding work, but this is not always matched appropriately to pupils' needs. For example, in a lesson on 'The Vikings', the text provided was the same for all pupils. Some pupils found the piece challenging to read because the vocabulary was too complex. Although the teacher planned an interesting card-sort activity, pupils did not understand what words such as 'colonise' and 'integrate' meant. Consequently, this limited their interest, engagement and progress.
- Teachers' use of questioning to check pupils' understanding or to move pupils on to more challenging activities varies. In some cases, pupils are given too much time to complete simple tasks. This hinders their progress, especially that of the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are not consistent in moving pupils on in their

learning to deepen their understanding as soon as they are ready, particularly the most able. For example, in a mathematics lesson, some capable pupils found the activity of converting centimetres to metres too easy. When they asked if they could complete the challenge on the board, they were told that they must complete the whole sheet first.

- In both writing and mathematics, there is insufficient evidence that teachers routinely and consistently require pupils to apply the skills and knowledge they have learned. Pupils are not always given the opportunity to discuss and extend their understanding. They are not consistently required to go back, self-check and learn from mistakes as the school's policy indicates they should. This means that pupils are not systematically deepening their understanding or increasingly learning to work things out for themselves.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are proficient at teaching phonics, although the pace of learning is occasionally too slow. 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 teaching of reading is more consistently developed. The majority of pupils enjoy reading and are able to use their early reading skills to attempt unfamiliar words. Readers were keen to read to inspectors; their books were well chosen and usually at the right level. On one or two occasions, some books were too easy for the pupil because they were read with ease and did not provide sufficient challenge. Pupils use appropriate expression in their reading. Pupils read accurately and use their inference skills well. However, pupils struggle to identify their favourite authors or describe the types of books they like to read.
- Teachers have good relationships with pupils and pupils are keen to learn. Teachers consistently maintain a calm and focused climate for learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. This is a caring and nurturing school. Pupils develop good levels of confidence and self-esteem. Most have positive attitudes towards learning and are keen to do well. They know that perseverance and resilience will help them to learn well. They are cared for well.
- The work of the family support worker and learning mentor is effective and well regarded by staff and parents alike. They act as the bridge between families and the school. A range of support programmes is provided for parents, such as mathematics, English and 'cooking on a budget', which helps create positive links between home and school. The family support worker and learning mentor provide pastoral support for pupils who find making friends difficult and work intensively with the small number of pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour.
- One parent wrote, 'Our experience of this school is that the inclusion/emotional well-being support offered to our child/family by the special needs coordinator, class teachers, family support workers and teaching assistants has been really exceptional.'

- Pupils are confident that they are kept safe. They say that worries are dealt with quickly. A very large majority of parents agree.
- Pupils keenly adopt healthy lifestyles. The many sporting activities are well attended. Pupils speak with relish about the range of activities on offer such as netball, gymnastics and football. This is supported by local sports teams, for example Northampton Town Football Club visited the school for a 'Cobblers takeover day'.
- Pupils take on responsibilities enthusiastically and enjoy contributing to school life. For instance, the worship team prepared and delivered an assembly to illustrate the need for patience. This was well received by all pupils. Pupils thrive on the opportunities provided for them to take responsibility such as school councillors, play leaders, house captains and road safety heroes.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the promotion of British values are threaded throughout all school activities and are supported well. Pupils are kind and caring to each other. Pupils are tolerant of the views of others, listening carefully when others are talking and taking good account of their opinions or ideas.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The large majority of parents, and most pupils and staff, agree that pupils behave well. The school is an orderly community because pupils understand the school rules and appreciate their value. Pupils get on well together and take good care of the school site by keeping it tidy and litter free.
- The school's behaviour management policy is consistently applied. Pupils beam with pleasure and pride when they are asked to move their peg up the rewards board when they have done something well. This motivates them to try even harder.
- Pupils say that there is occasional bullying but it is tackled well. Pupils know who to turn to if they have a concern. They are very clear about how to avoid danger when, for instance, walking to and from school, recognising that bullying can take many forms.
- The small number of pupils that exhibit challenging behaviour are well managed by adults. Those pupils who need extra support to help them behave well are very positive about the help they are given.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range and variety of before- and after-school clubs and lunchtime activities that are available to them. Mornings are a hive of activity, with opportunities to read and play a variety of games on offer. Pupils say that this is a good way to start the day.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their attendance and punctuality are above average. The work of the learning mentor and family support worker contributes well to pupils' regular attendance. They meticulously follow up any lateness or absenteeism, and clear steps are taken to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. The school promotes good attendance in a variety of ways such as in assembly and through newsletters.
- Most pupils approach their work with enthusiasm and confidence and try hard to succeed, but when the pace of learning slackens, some disengage and do not sustain their concentration.
- Staff engage well with parents about how well their children are doing.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because there are inconsistencies in rates of progress for groups of pupils and in different subject areas. The progress of disadvantaged pupils and the most able, including the most able disadvantaged, is slower than that of other pupils.
- There have been some notable improvements. For instance, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 1 has shown year-on-year improvement since the last inspection, and outcomes in 2016 were close to the national average.
- By the end of key stage 2 in 2016, attainment in mathematics was above the national average at the expected standard and outcomes in reading and writing were in line with those found nationally. However, disadvantaged pupils attained less well than other pupils. In addition, too few pupils were working at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress made by Year 6 pupils from their starting points at the end of key stage 1 was similar to that found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Attainment by the end of key stage 1 in 2016 was below the national average at the expected standard in writing and mathematics, although outcomes in reading were similar to those found nationally. Too few pupils were assessed to be working at greater depth in writing and mathematics. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils were below those of their peers.
- Although a range of actions have been implemented to address these shortfalls, until recently, they have not had sufficient impact. This is because leaders have not been urgent or rigorous enough in addressing the weaknesses in teaching and learning. Things are now improving rapidly, but more focused work is needed to bring about greater improvement in the achievement of disadvantaged and most able pupils.
- School assessment information for Years 2 and 6 shows that more pupils are working at the expectations for their age in reading, writing and mathematics this year. This is borne out by the scrutiny of pupils' books and work undertaken during the inspection. However, school data shows that uneven progress is being made through the school in some other year groups. Leaders know that there is work still to be done to minimise the differences, particularly for disadvantaged and the most able pupils.
- The school focus on writing is beginning to pay dividends. Pupils are increasingly being provided with opportunities to write at length and this is helping to build up their writing stamina. Pupils are also using interesting vocabulary to engage the reader. The quality of pupils' handwriting is improving, but some pupils do not form their letters accurately enough. Pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation require improvement. Teachers and teaching assistants do not address pupils' misconceptions soon enough. Consequently, some pupils routinely misspell common words or key vocabulary without correction.
- Pupils are increasing their confidence in mathematics. For example, they are making improved progress in developing problem-solving skills, using the most efficient methods to solve problems and explaining their thinking. These improvements are not evident in all classes, however.

- Opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their English and mathematics skills in other subjects. For instance, there is some evidence of mathematics work in science books and pupils' writing is evident in science, religious education and humanities books.
- 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 pupils lack confidence in applying their phonic 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 good progress from their starting points because they are provided with additional intervention and support. Intervention groups provided by teachers and teaching assistants are effective.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that provision in the early years is consistently good. Staff absence and changes in staffing have impeded progress. Consequently, until recently, assessments of children's development have not been used well enough to ensure that learning tasks provided in the indoor and outdoor environments have been consistently purposeful to extend children's learning.
- Since March 2017, the provision has received good support from the local authority and a local outstanding primary school. As a result, strong improvements are being made, but these have yet to see their full impact. The leader has a secure understanding of appropriate areas for development and what needs to improve. Staff make regular ongoing assessments of children's progress that are now being better used to plan next steps.
- Children's skills, knowledge and understanding on entry to Reception are broadly typical but within a wide range. An increasing proportion are starting school with English as an additional language. Weaknesses in children's communication and language are swiftly identified and early intervention is provided for those who find speaking and listening difficult.
- Until recently, children have made sound progress from their starting points, but the rate of progress has varied for groups of children over time. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has shown a year-on-year improvement since the previous inspection, and outcomes in 2016 were similar to those found nationally. The school's data and information for this year show a further acceleration. Children are now better prepared to start Year 1 than was the case previously.
- The learning environment is bright and stimulating and used effectively to support learning. Using the stimulus of 'The Very Busy Spider' by Eric Carle, there was plenty for children to read, write, count and make during the inspection. Children enjoy the range of opportunities to vary their activities, working productively both indoors and outdoors. Most children maintain their concentration when they are completing their tasks, although a few do not always persevere and sometimes move frequently from activity to activity.
- Leaders have implemented a range of actions to improve speaking and writing, such as

using assessments more effectively to target specific children and improving the curriculum to provide more opportunities for children to speak and write. These are beginning to have a positive impact, but further work is required.

- Adults are suitably developing children's reading, writing and mathematics skills. Children are beginning to make better progress with phonics and writing skills because adult-led activities are delivering precisely targeted work matched to children's needs. Sometimes, though, mistakes are not corrected, for instance when some children do not form their letters accurately or do not copy words accurately. Children can count with confidence and some can find a half of a given number using equipment to help them.
- Children's behaviour is good. They learn to play and work together happily. For example, children enjoyed investigating spiders, serving in the café and playing with hoops and balls.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective and children are happy and confident. Parents appreciate the approachability of staff and are rightly confident that their children are safe and well cared for.

School details

Unique reference number	122017
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10031156

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	336
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Lightfoot
Headteacher	Deborah Thompson
Telephone number	01604 406486
Website	www.standrews.northants.sch.uk
Email address	head@StAndrews-pri.northants-ecl.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 March 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This is a larger than average-sized primary school and the number on roll is rising following the change to two-form entry in 2012.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage but the number is reducing. Around a quarter are from a Black African background. An increasing proportion are from other White ethnic backgrounds such as Poland and Romania.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is close to the national average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is similar to that found nationally.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school club which is managed by the

governing body.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 16 lessons and attended two acts of collective worship. Fourteen observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or one of the assistant headteachers. In addition, the inspectors made several short visits to observe learning and small-group activities at other times.
- The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. They also met with school staff, including phase, middle and subject leaders.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its documentation, including teachers' planning, the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, and information on pupils' attainment and progress. Inspectors also looked at records of behaviour and safety, the monitoring of teaching and the management of teachers' performance, governing body minutes, monitoring and evaluation summaries by the local authority and safeguarding documents.
- Discussions were held with groups of pupils, as well as informal conversations with them during lessons and at breaktimes. The inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about books they enjoy.
- The inspectors took account of 50 responses to the online parental questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke with parents informally at the end of the school day. Responses to questionnaires completed by 24 pupils and eight staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Paul Weston, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jennifer Digges	Ofsted Inspector
Heidi Malliff	Ofsted Inspector

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