

# St Mary's CofE (VA) Primary School

Stoney Lane, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY10 2LX

## Inspection dates

6–7 June 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher has been unswerving in her determination to change the culture of the school to enhance the life chances of pupils. As a result, standards are improving rapidly and pupils receive a good education.
- Governors strongly support the school's improvement agenda. Their range of skills and thorough knowledge of the school allow them to support leaders and teachers and to hold them to account.
- All pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their starting points. This is because they are well taught and well supported through the school.
- Leaders provide pupils with a wide range of learning activities, both in school and through trips and visits. As a result, pupils enjoy their school life and behave well, and the atmosphere in school is pleasant and purposeful.
- Pupils are well looked after. Leaders and staff make sure pupils are safe and know how to stay safe.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is well supported by the curriculum and the extra-curricular activities the school offers. Consequently, pupils are equipped to understand the diverse society in which they live and to become tolerant and well-rounded individuals.
- Teachers and support staff in the Nursery and Reception classes are dedicated, caring and skilled. They provide children with a wide range of activities within a safe environment to support their intellectual, creative, physical and social development. As a result, children are well prepared to move on to Year 1.
- The change of culture and the appointment of a large number of new staff over the last two years have led to a significant improvement in the quality of teaching. However, activities in lessons are not yet consistently challenging enough, especially for the most able pupils.
- Subject leaders provide strong support to the headteacher in terms of monitoring progress and putting in place interventions. However, they do not yet have sufficient impact on reducing the variability in the quality of teaching in their subject areas.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress by ensuring that all pupils, especially the most able, are consistently given challenging tasks that allow them to fulfil their potential in all subjects.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management by developing the role of subject leaders so that they further raise expectations and standards in their respective areas.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher has made it her key priority to transform the culture of the school so that pupils develop positive attitudes to learning. Her determination and well-thought-through strategies have led to significant improvements in behaviour, quality of teaching and expectations.
- With the support of governors, the headteacher has addressed the staffing issues that were previously preventing improvements in teaching and learning. As a result of her actions, the school is fully staffed with well-qualified teachers who share her ambitions for the school.
- To strengthen the effectiveness of teachers and support staff, the school has a comprehensive programme of professional development in place. With the support of a local teaching school alliance, other local authority schools and external consultants, leaders and staff have access to effective training opportunities. As a result, the implementation of the school's improvement agenda is moving forward apace.
- In order to further support the professional development of staff, leaders set them targets and monitor their progress through the school's performance management system. Staff are positive about the fairness of the system and the ways in which it helps them progress through their career.
- Leaders and governors monitor pupils' progress closely. The school has a new system to track the progress pupils make across the curriculum. The new system allows leaders to identify when and where some pupils need additional support to catch up. Leaders can also hold teachers to account for their performance accurately by analysing the progress of different groups of pupils.
- The headteacher reviewed the curriculum, with the help of her senior team, to make it more relevant to pupils. To this end, the new curriculum draws extensively on the local industrial heritage of the area. The curriculum is also designed to ensure that a sufficient amount of lesson time is devoted to subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Religious education features highly because of the denomination of the school. Pupils are taught physical education, computing, music, art and humanities. Leaders chose a thematic approach to encourage pupils to make links between subjects and to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.
- The curriculum is enriched by memorable experiences, such as museum visits or presentations by external speakers, linked to the themes that pupils study. Pupils are also offered a range of extra-curricular activities to both develop their awareness of the local community and broaden their horizons. In addition to a wide range of activities available at the breakfast and after-school clubs, pupils learn about the environment at the school farm or at 'forest school'. They can be part of the choir and the art club or, for Year 6, enjoy outdoor activities during the three-day residential visit that takes place every year. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the enrichment activities they do at school. These activities contribute greatly to their positive attitude towards learning.
- The headteacher and governors have a strong sense of their moral duty to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are fully supported through all aspects of their school life. The

pupil premium funding is used effectively to ensure that no pupil misses out on opportunities offered by the school or is prevented from making progress for material reasons. Leaders monitor closely the impact of the funding on the progress and well-being of individual pupils. As a result, they follow up issues that arise and intervene swiftly to support pupils and help them sustain their progress.

- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium has a positive impact on the development of the quality of PE teaching and pupils' participation in sports. The school has purchased sports equipment, including bicycles and equipment for the playground, so that pupils can try out and enjoy a range of sports. The PE coordinator is currently being trained to develop both PE teaching and competitive sport.
- Leaders' actions to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are having a positive impact on their progress. The funding to support pupils is spent effectively. It allows the school to provide a high level of personalised support, to work effectively with external agencies and to run initiatives such as 'language for learning' to develop pupils' communication skills. Dedicated members of staff receive regular training.
- The range of learning activities the school provides supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils explore spirituality in religious education lessons and in assemblies. They are actively encouraged to socialise and collaborate with each other, to learn about their community, and to develop their appreciation of the arts and music.
- Subject leaders are effective in gathering data and monitoring pupils' progress. However, they do not yet focus sufficiently on raising their colleagues' expectations in their respective areas of responsibility. As a result, classroom practice across key subjects is occasionally inconsistent.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governance of the school is strong. The governing body was reformed last year and, under the new chair of governors, the work of committees has become more sharply focused and effective. The governors know the school well and have, between them, the range of skills necessary to play a full part in the strategic direction of the school.
- Governors are actively involved in the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation. Their good understanding of pupils' progress data enables them to monitor effectively the impact of leaders' actions to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, they can support the headteacher effectively and hold her to account.
- Governors monitor all aspects of the management of the school's finances including the use and impact of additional funding such as the pupil premium. They also make sure that safeguarding policies and practices are effective and meet legal requirements. They ensure that the process of performance management of staff is effective and its links to pay progression are fair and transparent. Governors take responsibility for their own training to keep their knowledge and skills up to date.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has effective policies and procedures in place to ensure that pupils are safe. Staff undertake regular training and record-keeping is up to date. Teachers and other adults at the school are clear about their responsibilities and what they have to do to support pupils who may be at risk. Pupils are taught how to keep safe and trust adults at the school to look after them. When pupils experience difficult situations, the school works effectively with families and external agencies to ensure they get the best possible support.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Almost all teachers have been appointed over the last three years and some since the previous inspection. The school benefits from having a well-qualified and dedicated staff. Teachers and support staff thoroughly endorse the headteacher's improvement agenda. They feel well supported by the school and are keen to develop their skills. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving and pupils enjoy learning.
- The most common comments made by pupils when asked about school are that 'lessons are fun' and 'teachers help you learn'. Teachers have good subject knowledge and a genuine enthusiasm for engaging pupils' interest. Time is used effectively in lessons because pupils look forward to the classroom experience.
- One of the main issues that teachers face is that a large number of pupils have poor language skills. For that reason, the school has a strong focus on promoting reading. All pupils have at least half an hour reading time every day and those who are in Years 5 and 6 are required to do half an hour of reading after school as part of their homework. This approach is giving pupils opportunities to develop their vocabulary. School records show that it is impacting positively on their overall progress in reading and writing.
- To support progress in reading the school has invested in the development of the teaching of phonics. Staff undertook extensive training to ensure that pupils are properly taught to link letters and sounds. As a result, pupils can access reading materials suitable for their age and abilities from the early stages of their education.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly and rigorously. They moderate pupils' assessments internally as well as externally, with colleagues from local schools. This allows them to validate their monitoring of pupils' progress and to provide accurate progress data to leaders.
- Teachers are proactive in ensuring that pupils who experience difficulties are supported effectively so that they do not fall behind others. To this end, they work well with support staff to provide adequate support through well-planned intervention strategies during lessons. This approach results in pupils who find some aspects of learning difficult being able to keep up with their peers.
- While there is evidence in exercise books that pupils generally complete work which is appropriately challenging for their abilities, on occasions teachers do not challenge pupils well enough and this slows progress, especially for the most able. For instance,

planned activities and teachers' questioning do not always provide pupils with opportunities to deepen their skills and knowledge or develop the resilience needed to pursue study for themselves.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- On its website the school states that 'offering an exciting and engaging curriculum in a truly caring environment, we encourage our pupils to experience life to the full'. This statement resonates in many aspects of the school life. Throughout their school career, pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to enjoy new experiences and broaden their horizons.
- The school has a strong emphasis on encouraging pupils to fully appreciate what it means to belong to a community, both at school and outside school. In school, pupils can take on responsibilities as members of the school council, or support others during social time as 'playground buddies'. Many visits to places of interest in the vicinity of the school give pupils the opportunity to have a better understanding of the area where they live.
- Visits as well as talks and assemblies led by external speakers provide pupils with opportunities to reflect on moral values, the rule of law and citizenship. As a result pupils acquire an understanding of key issues related to British values and democracy.
- Pupils' welfare and their emotional well-being are at the heart of what the school does. Leaders and staff are alert to the need to ensure that all pupils, especially those who are the most vulnerable, are well supported when they suffer from issues that can affect their emotional stability.
- Pupils are safe and feel safe at school. They are taught about risks and how to avoid them. The school organises a wide range of activities to inform pupils about safety issues, including what to avoid when using social media and the internet.
- The school has a clear anti-bullying policy with which pupils are familiar. Pupils can clearly state what the many forms of bullying are and the ways in which bullying can lead to serious consequences. They trust teachers to intervene swiftly to stop bullying. The school records show that bullying is dealt with effectively.
- The large majority of parents who talked to inspectors and responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire confirmed that their children are safe and happy at school.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour has been one of the key areas on which leaders have focused since the previous inspection. The headteacher's claim that 'there has been a monumental shift for the school from fire-fighting to being able to finely tune pupils' perceptions of how to behave' is corroborated by the positive attitudes pupils have throughout the day in

lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtime.

- Pupils are positive about the school's system of rewards and sanctions. They are clear about what is expected from them. The school's records show that the number of incidents of bad behaviour is decreasing. They also show that the school deals effectively with such incidents.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are positive and pupils show respect to adults. Pupils also collaborate well with each other in lessons and show respect to each other during social times. For example, the use of the more popular playground equipment is subject to a rota system which has the unreserved approval of pupils.
- The school has had to deal with poor attendance over a number of years. Leaders are taking very strong actions to ensure that absences are reduced. The school employs a family support worker to improve communication between homes and school. The 'walking bus', which consists of members of staff who collect pupils from designated 'bus stops' close to their homes every day, is another effective initiative that the school uses to ensure better attendance. As a result, from a low point, there has been a reduction in the number of pupils who miss school and records show that there is now a positive trend to the attendance figures.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Key stage 1 and key stage 2 results in 2016 were disappointing for the school. Leaders analysed those results and put in place monitoring and intervention systems to ensure that pupils' progress is sustained and outcomes reflect this progress. As a result, current school records show that pupils are making good progress from their starting points.
- There was an improvement from 2015 to 2016 at key stage 1 in the proportion of pupils who reached the required standards in phonics. Results were in line with the national average, reflecting the impact of much-improved teaching. Progress is sustained this year.
- There has been a strong focus, at key stage 2, on addressing issues that stemmed from historically weak teaching in reading and mathematics. Progress in books, as well as in records of rigorously moderated assessments, is good across the key stage. There is clear evidence of the areas where the improvement in the quality of teaching and the rigour of assessment are having a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- Pupils' progress, as recorded by the school, is now strong in both key stages across the curriculum. Key stage 2 science books, for example, show that pupils are progressing well and developing skills and understanding in physics, chemistry and biology. This also provides evidence of older pupils becoming familiar with aspects of learning they will encounter when they move on to the next stage of their education.
- Disadvantaged pupils benefit academically from the attention and support the school provides for them. The impact of the school's strategies to support pupils in receipt of the pupil premium is in evidence in the progress those pupils make. Records of leaders' monitoring of disadvantaged pupils' progress show that, from their starting points, they are making good progress across the curriculum in all year groups.
- Progress data shows that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities



are making good progress from their starting points. The effective, coordinated work of teachers and support staff, as well as intervention strategies, are having a positive impact on outcomes.

- The school has a growing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language who join at various stages of their education and times of the year. Those pupils receive effective support to catch up and be able to access the curriculum as soon as possible if they do not have sufficient command of English to start with. Consequently, pupils who speak English as an additional language make at least as much progress as others from their starting points.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are making good progress from their starting points. Work in books and assessment records show that they sustain their progress across the curriculum. However, because there are occasions when the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged, the progress of some pupils is not accelerated rapidly enough.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- The provision in the early years is effective because it is well led. Teachers and other adults who work with children are well qualified and provide a good level of care and supervision. As a result, children enjoy a range of developmental activities that prepare them well for the more formal schooling in key stage 1.
- Typically, a large proportion of pupils who join the Nursery and Reception classes have language and communication skills which are below average for their age. The early years leader has effective strategies in place to ensure that they are given appropriate support to make accelerated progress and catch up.
- Leaders ensure that additional funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged children. They regularly monitor the impact of the support provided. As a result, disadvantaged children make good progress from their starting points.
- Teaching is focused on the needs of different groups and individuals. Children's skills and understanding are assessed when they enter the early years. The rigorous approach implemented by the early years leader and her team has led to an improvement in the progress children make. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development is increasing. In 2016 this proportion was above the national average.
- As in the other stages at the school, the teaching of phonics is effective. Early reading and letter formation contribute greatly to the overall development of children.
- Children adjust well to the classroom routines and interact well with each other. They are well behaved and respond positively to adults' instructions.
- The recently developed indoor and outdoor areas provide a stimulating environment for children to play and develop the skills that will allow them to progress.
- Transition into Nursery and Reception classes is effective because the school involves the parents as much as possible in the process. Parents' ongoing involvement in their children's early education is also encouraged through the use of 'parent voice' sessions where they are invited to discuss their children's development with staff. Staff also



produce a regular newsletter to keep parents informed.

- Safeguarding is effective. Teachers and other adults are attentive to the needs of children and make sure that they are appropriately supervised at all times.
- The early years curriculum is well planned to offer children a range of development opportunities to suit their needs and abilities. The curriculum contributes greatly to children's enjoyment of the early years and to the progress they make.

## School details

Unique reference number	135057
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10032578

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Valerie Houghton
Headteacher	Sarah Perrett
Telephone number	01562 824327
Website	<a href="http://www.stmaryscevaprimary.co.uk">www.stmaryscevaprimary.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@stmarys.worcs.sch.uk">office@stmarys.worcs.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	23–24 June 2015

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The early years comprises Nursery classes for two-year-old and three-year-old children who attend either morning, afternoon or full time and a Reception class for children who attend full time.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is slightly below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is

above average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above average.

- 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 pupils' learning in 16 lessons. A number of lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They met two groups of pupils to gain their views of the school. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime, and at the start and end of the school day, as well as in lessons.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including: assessments and records of pupils' progress; the school's checks and records related to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance; records of governors' activities; records of how teaching is managed; and the school's own self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator, the early years leader and three middle leaders. The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body and three other governors. The lead inspector also met with a representative of Worcestershire local authority and an external consultant who has worked with the school for some years.
- Inspectors took into account the views of the 13 members of staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- Inspectors talked to parents at the start and end of the school day and considered 31 parental responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View.

## Inspection team

Patrick Amieli, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Collette Higgins	Ofsted Inspector

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