

St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Hinckley

Station Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire LE10 1AW

Inspection dates

8–9 June 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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that the assessment of pupils' learning is accurate enough to guide their own, and the governors', analysis of the school's performance and setting of precise targets for improvement.
- Middle leaders are not sufficiently involved in creating improvement plans to drive more rapid improvement in the attainment and progress of groups of pupils.
- The governing body has not been tenacious enough in challenging the school's leaders about pupils' outcomes, particularly those of disadvantaged pupils.
- Teachers do not consistently use information about pupils' learning well enough to plan next steps in learning.
- Teachers do not consistently plan lessons that meet the needs of pupils who have different abilities. Too often, the least able and the most able do not always make the progress that they should in key stages 1 and 2. Pupils' outcomes do not match the potential that they show in lessons.
- Teachers' expectations for the quality and presentation of pupils' work, particularly in writing, are sometimes too low.

The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving school. The new headteacher is galvanising staff and promoting a culture of higher expectations and ambition for pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' behaviour and conduct are very good throughout the school. There are good relationships between staff and pupils.
- Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- Pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics, including that of disadvantaged pupils, are improving.
- Children make a good start to their education in the early years.
- Leaders' and staff's commitment to the well-being, personal development and safety of each pupil is evident in the school's caring culture.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders should strengthen their impact on, and increase the pace of, improvement by:
 - ensuring that the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is fully accurate, to enable leaders and governors to have a more precise understanding of the school's performance
 - developing the role of middle leaders in planning actions that will raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers accurately assess pupils' learning to identify the next steps in learning
 - teachers match work closely to pupils' abilities, particularly for the most able and the least able
 - expectations for the quality of pupils' writing and presentation of their work are high in all subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of the governing body in securing school improvement by ensuring that:
 - governors have the skills they need to hold the school more stringently to account for the achievement of groups of pupils
 - governors monitor closely the impact of additional funding, particularly the pupil premium, to improve outcomes for pupils
 - the governing body acts fully on the findings from the recent reviews of governance and of the use of the pupil premium.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not yet ensured that teachers' assessment of pupils' learning is consistently secure and accurate. Work in pupils' books shows that, too often, teachers assess pupils incorrectly as working at age-related expectations or at greater depth, in English and mathematics. Leaders have ensured that staff work closely with other schools to develop their skills in assessing pupils' learning. However, these skills are not yet fully embedded in practice across the school. This reduces the accuracy of leaders' and governors' evaluations of the school's performance, and of the effectiveness of school improvement planning to bring about pupils' accelerated progress.
- Senior and middle leaders said that they now feel empowered under the leadership of the new headteacher. Middle and subject leaders have had training to develop their roles and are increasing their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their subject areas. However, subject leaders do not yet draw up plans for improvement, which are linked to enhancing pupils' attainment and progress. The headteacher has rightly identified this as a priority for development.
- Leaders have used the pupil premium funding to improve the achievement, well-being and confidence of disadvantaged pupils. A family support worker is working effectively with families to improve attendance. The funding is also used to employ a play therapist and additional teaching staff. Leaders have raised the profile of the needs of disadvantaged pupils, and teachers are now checking the progress of disadvantaged pupils more carefully. However, the impact of the spending of the funding and actions taken have not been analysed thoroughly enough to ensure that the funding is having the maximum impact on accelerating disadvantaged pupils' progress.
- In 2016, the school met the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school, based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016. The new headteacher, leaders, staff and the governing body are working effectively to address the legacy of underachievement.
- The new headteacher is providing clear leadership. She is galvanising staff to create a whole-school team ethos. She is aware of the key areas that the school needs to work on and, together with leaders, staff and the governing body, is instilling a culture of improvement in which all pupils are expected to achieve as well as they should.
- The headteacher has revised systems for managing the performance of staff. She holds regular meetings with teachers to discuss pupils' progress in detail. Teachers are now aware of those pupils who are not achieving as well as they should and identify the actions needed to help them catch up.
- Leaders have introduced new initiatives and revised approaches to teaching many aspects of the curriculum. While not yet secure, these are improving standards. A new approach to teaching phonics has been introduced in the early years and key stage 1, for example. Inspectors saw evidence of strong teaching and learning. However, the teaching of the new programme is not yet consistently effective across key stage 1.
- Teachers are promoting pupils' positive attitudes to reading and have introduced an

online resource to make a wide variety of books available to all pupils. Teachers ensure that pupils have more opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics, to support learning at greater depth. However, this is not consistently embedded across the school.

- The headteacher has welcomed and been proactive in seeking external support, for example, working with the cluster of schools, a teaching alliance and the school improvement partner. This outward-looking view is helping to bring about stronger school improvement.
- Leaders have used the additional funding for physical education and sports well, to support the improvement of teaching and rates of pupils' participation in sporting activities and inter-school events.
- Leaders use increasingly effectively the additional funding to support a range of interventions for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The progress of these pupils, overall, is improving and in line with that of other pupils in the school.
- Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Enrichment activities and extra-curricular clubs equip pupils well socially and emotionally, for their life in modern Britain. Pupils in Year 4, for example, told inspectors why voting was important and were able to link the democratic process to their own lives.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has not been sufficiently stringent in holding the school to account about the achievement of different groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. Governors have not been effective enough in analysing whether additional funding, particularly the pupil premium, has had the maximum impact on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- The governing body welcomed and undertook a review of governance in December 2016, and a review of the use of the pupil premium in January 2017. Governors are beginning to act on the recommendations and are becoming more effective in their roles. Governors show a good understanding of the revised arrangements for the performance management of teachers, for example, which is helping to raise their expectations for the impact of teaching on pupils' attainment and progress.
- The governing body is forward looking, and is working closely with the headteacher to bring about continuing improvement. Governors undertake regular visits to the school to monitor the curriculum, meet with middle leaders, and review, for example, safeguarding arrangements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The single central record is compliant and recruitment checks are thorough. The designated leaders for safeguarding ensure that staff training is up to date. The adults in the school are aware of, and vigilant for, the signs of different forms of abuse. Staff have received training on the government's

'Prevent' duty.

- Pupils said that they feel safe in school. This view is supported by the very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Pupils speak knowledgeably about how to keep themselves safe, including how to keep themselves safe online.
- Pupils trust adults in the school to deal with any concerns they have quickly and effectively. This reflects the culture of care that is evident in pupils of all ages and supported by the positive role models provided by leaders and staff.
- Pupils are certain that incidents of bullying are rare and the school is a safe place to learn. A small number of parents were less positive about the school's response to bullying, but inspectors could find no evidence to support their concern.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers are not consistently adept in accurately assessing pupils' understanding and using this information to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Pupils' work shows that they often complete work of the same level of difficulty, rather than quickly moving on to more challenging work. Teachers do not consistently provide work that is well matched to pupils' abilities. On too many occasions, teachers ask the most able pupils to complete the same work as pupils working at the level expected for their age. On some occasions, the least able pupils are given work that is not appropriate for their abilities. The attainment and progress of too many pupils is not as good as it should be.
- Expectations of the quality of writing in different subjects are inconsistent, and many pupils produce a lower standard of work than they are capable of producing. Teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation are used accurately in their writing, especially in subjects other than English.
- Teachers promote positive attitudes to reading and encourage pupils to read regularly at school and at home. There are many school displays celebrating the importance of reading. However, pupils' reading books are sometimes not well matched to their reading ability.
- Leaders have worked with the support of another school to develop the school's approach to the teaching of phonics. The quality of phonics teaching is improving, but is not yet consistently good.
- Pupils' books show that teachers now plan opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills regularly. However, pupils are not often encouraged to show reasoning through explaining what they have done, and why.
- Teachers are responding positively to the leadership of the new headteacher, and there is a culture of higher expectations for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Where teaching is stronger, teachers use their good subject knowledge to skilfully question pupils to assess their understanding and develop their thinking. However, this level of questioning is not evident in all classes. Teachers have positive relationships with pupils and plan lessons that engage and stimulate their curiosity.

- Pupils are enthusiastic, eager to learn and determined to do their best. Teachers praise pupils' efforts, which builds their confidence and creates a positive and productive atmosphere for learning.
- Teaching assistants are generally used effectively to support the learning of pupils of different abilities, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers ensure that these additional adults are clear about their roles. Occasionally, the impact of this extra support is not as good as it could be, because the adults are not skilled in adjusting work to meet the needs of pupils who require more support or challenge to help them make progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Staff praise pupils for their work, behaviour and the way in which they work together. Pupils develop positive attitudes towards their learning, embracing and putting into practice the school's rules and values. Pupils in key stage 2 spoke with inspectors about the importance of perseverance and not giving up. Many positive messages are displayed around the school, reflecting the positive, caring school ethos.
- Pupils are self-confident and articulate and welcome the roles that the school offers them, such as the house captains, 'clean-up crew', librarians or school councillors. Pupils listen to each other's ideas and views, and are respectful of different viewpoints.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' conduct around the school and at different times of the day is good and sometimes exemplary. They apply themselves to all that is asked of them in lessons and only lose focus if work is not well matched to their needs.
- Pupils are respectful to their peers, their teachers and their school. They are courteous, friendly and polite in lessons, corridors or on the playground. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their learning and are proud of their school.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Leaders have raised the profile with parents of the importance of attendance. As a result of increased focus and the family support worker, attendance is improving, and currently above that seen nationally. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is also improving, though still below that of pupils nationally.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The attainment and progress for pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are not good. Over time, pupils do not make the progress they should because work is not consistently well matched to their needs and abilities. Observations of the work in pupils' books show that pupils too often are asked to complete the same work, which means that the most

able and the least able pupils do not make the progress they should.

- Teachers do not ensure that the quality of written work completed by pupils in their topics or other subjects is as high as it is in English and mathematics. Comparisons of pupils' work in different year groups and subjects show that teachers' expectations for the quality of pupils' work are inconsistent.
- In 2016, the progress that Year 6 pupils made through key stage 2, in reading, writing and mathematics, was well below average. Data showed that standards in key stage 1 phonics had declined for the previous three years. Many groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and the most -able pupils, have not made the progress they should for too long. Standards are now improving, although this is not yet consistent.
- Pupils in key stage 1 apply their phonics knowledge and use a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words. There is evidence that standards are rising. Pupils in key stage 2 show good comprehension skills. Some pupils, however, do not develop higher reading skills because they are not given challenging enough texts to read.
- Leaders have identified the need to improve pupils' outcomes in key stages 1 and 2. Pupils' work and the school's own information suggest that attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics, including the quality of handwriting and presentation are improving. This is the result of teachers' clearer understanding of the expectations for each year group and leaders' higher expectations for the quality of teaching. However, this not yet fully or consistently embedded.
- Leaders and teachers now check the progress of disadvantaged pupils more carefully. The '20 day challenge' initiative, for example, provided a focused period of time in which teachers gave extra scrutiny to the progress of underachieving pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. While the school's assessment information is not yet consistently accurate, there is evidence, including work in pupils' books, showing that the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils is improving in line with those of other pupils in the school.
- In 2016, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities made slow progress by the time they reached the end of both key stages 1 and 2. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities often receive good support in class. Leaders and teachers review the impact of this support, modifying it where improvement has not been as effective as it should be. Work in pupils' books and school information show that the progress of these pupils is improving and pupils are making similar progress to other pupils.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make a good start to their education in the early years. School assessment information, moderated by the local authority, and children's learning journey development records, show that the proportion of children on track to achieve or exceed a good level of development is rising and likely to be at or above that seen nationally. Children make good progress from their starting points and are well prepared for Year 1.
- The headteacher has worked closely with the experienced and knowledgeable early

years leader and actively sought external support and training to improve the quality of leadership, planning, teaching and assessment. Changes to the indoor and outdoor areas have also been implemented and have had a positive impact on children's learning.

- Leaders in the early years are effective in identifying strengths and aspects that need to be improved. The early years leader has implemented a range of support to improve the achievement of disadvantaged children and boys' writing, for example. While boys' attainment is still lower than that of girls, school assessment information and children's learning journeys show that this work is having a positive impact on accelerating boys' progress.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to question children skilfully and teach well-planned activities to stimulate children's curiosity. Inspectors observed children happily exploring a wide range of activities linked to their mini-beast topic, camping 'outdoors' in the role-play area, for example.
- Children behave very well in the early years and enjoy their learning. They often show good levels of independence. For example, inspectors observed a group of boys cooperating well with each other while playing a challenging mathematical bingo game, taking turns to read numbers from a dice and cover numbers on their cards.
- The school is working in partnership with parents and has established effective home-school liaison. This was evident in children's reading records and a class display in which parents had the opportunity to share their children's successes.
- Leaders ensure that the safety and well-being of children is well managed and the early years welfare arrangements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	120134
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10031247

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	314
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judith Williams
Headteacher	Rachel Ayres
Telephone number	01455 637477
Website	www.stmarys.leics.sch.uk/
Email address	administration@stmarys.leics.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23– 24 April 2013

Information about this school

- St Mary's Church of England Primary School is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- 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 below the national averages.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school has had three headteachers since the last inspection. The current headteacher took up post in August 2016.

- The new chair of the governing body took up post in May 2017.
- In 2016, the school met the government's current floor standards for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6, but also met the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school, based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the governing body, the deputy headteacher, senior, middle and subject leaders and a representative from the local authority. Discussions explored a wide range of subjects, including safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including the school’s 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 of pupils, minutes of meetings of the governing body, performance management records and the school’s most recent information relating to the attendance of pupils.
- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. Some lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and/or the deputy headteacher. Inspectors observed the teaching of early reading skills and listened to pupils reading. Inspectors talked with pupils about their school and looked at examples of their work with senior leaders.
- Inspectors spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. They took account of the 41 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 18 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

John Lawson, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Jane Green	Ofsted Inspector
Yvonne Watts	Ofsted Inspector
Debbie Beeston	Ofsted Inspector

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