

St Mary's CofE Primary Academy, Burton Latimer

High Street, Burton Latimer, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN15 5RL

Inspection dates

29–30 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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The school has not tackled successfully all of the issues identified as weaknesses in the previous inspection. It is improving, but not rapidly enough.
- Standards are improving but remain below the national averages at the end of key stage 2. Pupils are making slower progress than that expected nationally.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving, particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Teachers do not ensure that pupils in key stage 2 read regularly enough and become thoughtful readers.
- Pupils' writing skills are below average and they do not have enough opportunities to improve their skills.
- Teaching does not provide enough challenge for the most able pupils.
- Teaching does not ensure that the lower-attaining pupils are improving their skills in writing and mathematics quickly enough to catch up with their peers.
- Too few disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points and so they are not attaining as well as other pupils.
- Governors rely too heavily on leaders' and others' views of the school's performance. They do not have a full picture of the school's effectiveness.
- When leaders check how well pupils are learning, they do not identify clearly the reasons why pupils are not making better progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have used coaching and training well to improve the effectiveness of individual teachers.
- The early years provision is good. Children gain successfully the skills and knowledge they need for key stage 1.
- The teaching of phonics is effective.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are kind to one another.
- The school's curriculum, including a wide range of clubs, promotes pupils' personal development effectively.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders identify clearly the strengths and weaknesses in the provision and their impact upon how well pupils are achieving when they check on the quality of teaching and learning
 - governors gain an independent and accurate view of the school's performance and use it to hold leaders to account more effectively
 - leaders use pupil premium funding more precisely to overcome barriers to learning and have a more positive impact on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils
 - leaders use funds to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities more effectively to accelerate their academic progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching, so that it is consistently good or better, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - provide work in all subjects that challenges the most able pupils
 - have expectations of pupils' learning that are as high in other subjects as they are in English and mathematics
 - provide more opportunities for pupils in key stage 2 to read regularly and master the full range of reading skills expected for their ages
 - help lower-attaining pupils to apply their writing and mathematics skills accurately when using these across the curriculum
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to complete extended pieces writing so that they become confident, independent writers.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium 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

- Leaders have been too slow to bring about improvement. Standards have risen in most year groups but not all of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been tackled successfully.
- The senior leadership team is enthusiastic to make St Mary's a great school. Its checks on the quality of teaching and learning, however, lack rigour. For example, when leaders conduct lesson observations or work scrutinies, they do not identify clearly the factors that are preventing pupils from making better progress.
- Leaders have also failed to spot weaknesses in the teaching of subjects other than English and mathematics. This has meant that the activities set for pupils, including those in mixed-aged classes, do not taken into account the different needs of the pupils.
- The pupil premium is not spent effectively to help disadvantaged pupils. Funding is not always targeted carefully to overcome their specific barriers to learning. This prevents many disadvantaged pupils from making good progress.
- Leaders use funding provided to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to meet the very specific and complex needs of individual pupils. This supports these pupils well. Overall, however, the funding is not used effectively enough to secure good academic progress among all pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The curriculum promotes the pupils' personal development well. Pupils are kind to one another and are sensitive to the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils particularly value the visits they make as part of their studies, and the visitors who come to the school to share their expertise. The pupils who met with inspectors were especially positive about the music work they enjoy in school.
- Leaders use the physical education and sport premium effectively. They ensure that the funding is improving the quality of provision in this area. Extra-curricular clubs are well attended and pupils enjoy the increased opportunities they have to take part in competitions between local schools.
- All staff who shared their views with inspectors spoke positively of the quality of leadership. They commented enthusiastically on the support they receive through professional development opportunities, and judged that morale is high and that the school is improving.
- The large majority of parents who spoke with inspectors or who expressed their views through Parent View are positive about the school and are happy with the education it provides. They see the school as being at the heart of the local community.
- The small number of parents who were critical of the school raised concerns about the many changes of staffing and the quality of communication between the school and parents. There has been greater stability in staffing this year. The principal has been made aware of the concerns about the quality of communication.

- School assemblies and the good range of enrichment activities enjoyed by the pupils make a positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. The school's values and beliefs help foster good relationships, tolerance and respect. Assembly themes ensure that pupils learn about other British values and gain an awareness, appropriate to their ages, of values such as democracy and the rule of law.

Governance of the school

- There have been significant changes to the composition of the academy trust, which is the school's governing body, since the last inspection. Following an audit of skills, new governors have been appointed to provide high levels of expertise in aspects of governance that were previously weak. The governing body is now better placed to drive improvement.
- Governors are ambitious for the school. They want St Mary's to be outstanding. Minutes of meetings of the governing body show that they are prepared to ask challenging questions about the current performance of the pupils.
- Staff performance, including that of the principal, is managed rigorously through an effective performance management system. The governing body looks very closely at how successful leaders and staff have been in meeting their targets before coming to decisions regarding salary increases.
- Governors rely mostly on reports from school leaders and others to learn about the school's effectiveness. Some governors visit the school to check on the impact of the actions being taken to accelerate pupils' progress. These, however, have not been frequent or rigorous enough to provide the full governing body with a truly accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Governors have not monitored the use of the pupil premium grant well enough to check its impact on the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, governors do not know whether or not the expenditure is providing good value for money.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Checks on the suitability of staff and volunteers are secure. Regular training ensures that staff know what to do if they have any concerns about a child's welfare.
- The safeguarding of children who are at risk of harm is strong. The staff team, including a family support worker and learning mentor, has a strong awareness of both the local and national issues that may put children at risk.
- The team has good links with a range of agencies that work together to protect children. These enable the school to ensure the well-being of children. The school's work with children looked after has been recognised as particularly strong by local agencies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is inconsistent throughout the school. This prevents pupils from making consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics over the time they are at the school. Good practice can be found in the school, and some individual teachers have been supported to become more effective. Overall, however, the quality of teaching has not improved enough since the last inspection.
- Teaching does not consistently challenge the most able pupils. Pupils told inspectors that they regularly do work that is familiar to them and so they find it too easy. Teachers often do not use what they know about the pupils' earlier learning to plan lessons. This means that the most able pupils are set work that does not stretch them.
- Teachers do not track pupils' personal reading in key stage 2 with sufficient care. As a result, pupils read infrequently outside lessons and from a narrow range of texts. Pupils feel the stock of books available in the school library is limited.
- Pupils in lower key stage 2 do not have enough opportunities to write longer, independent pieces. These pupils typically write a few sentences in their books which are then reviewed. There is much less evidence of pupils working for a sustained period, using their literacy skills, showing their creativity or sharing their ideas. This prevents the most able writers from reaching their potential.
- Teaching in subjects such as history, geography and science helps pupils to gain a basic knowledge of key facts. All pupils in the class, however, typically complete the same tasks, regardless of their age or ability. The level of challenge for many pupils is insufficient.
- When pupils apply their writing or mathematics skills in subjects outside of English and mathematics lessons, teachers' expectations are too low. Inaccurate punctuation, spelling and measurements are not always challenged. This means that teachers are not using the good opportunities they have to develop the basic skills of lower-attaining pupils.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Lessons are lively and engaging. Adults model how to blend sounds and segment words very effectively. When reading to inspectors, pupils in Year 1 used their phonic skills confidently to read words they were unfamiliar with.
- There is plenty of evidence of other elements of good practice across the school. For example, teachers and teaching assistants used questioning effectively to check on how well pupils were learning and to encourage pupils to reflect on their work. Most staff also show good subject knowledge when explaining ideas or summarising what pupils have learned at the end of a session.
- In the great majority of lessons, teachers manage behaviour well and pupils settle quickly to their work.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils report that bullying is rare and can give examples of when prompt action by adults quickly sorted out issues at school that were causing one or two pupils to be upset. They also report that adults will listen to them carefully and act to resolve any problems, even if they originated outside the school day.
- Pupils have opportunities to take on posts of responsibility and contribute to the life of the school. These include serving as young librarians, anti-bullying ambassadors, members of the school council, play leaders and members of the school choir. Pupils enjoy these responsibilities, but not all of these groups are currently as active as they have been in the past.
- Pupils understand the positive impact that doing well at school can have on their future lives. They showed impressive insight into the self-discipline required to make the right choices and the determination necessary to be successful in whatever they want to be. One pupil was happy to share how she has been inspired by one of her teachers to always to do the best she can.
- Pupils gain a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. The curriculum teaches them how to respond to situations that make them feel anxious or threatened. In physical education and science lessons pupils learn about the importance of keeping fit, eating well and making the right choices in later life when they come across tobacco, alcohol and other drugs and substances that can harm them.
- The school gives high priority to ensuring that pupils are aware of the risks to their safety when using social media sites and digital technologies. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of the serious potential dangers of sharing personal information and images online.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are friendly towards each other and welcoming to visitors. Polite and well mannered, they readily hold doors open for adults and show respect towards them. The great majority meet the school's high expectations of conduct in class and around the school.
- Typically, pupils are keen and conscientious learners. They are ready to volunteer answers and follow, to the letter, instructions by adults. In a very small number of lessons, however, one or two pupils can disturb the learning of others, particularly when these are led by someone other than their usual teacher.
- Pupils understand the school's behaviour policy well. They value the rewards for good behaviour and recognise the consequences for them of not behaving well.
- Pupils' attendance and punctuality are improving. Leaders have put in place effective systems to follow up instances of absence or lateness. Attendance is close to the

national average.

- In the past, the rate of persistent absence has been high. Led by the family support worker, the school is taking all of the appropriate actions to ensure that all families understand the importance of regular attendance. These actions are having a positive impact on attendance with individual families.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In recent years, pupils' achievement has been low. In 2015, the school failed to meet the government's floor standard. In 2016, this standard was met, but pupils' progress from their starting points in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6 was significantly below average.
- There is now evidence of improvement. The school's own information about pupils' attainment and progress shows that pupils in Year 6 made good progress during this school year. Pupils' books indicate that higher proportions than in the past have the writing and numeracy skills that are expected of pupils about to start their secondary education.
- Disadvantaged pupils underachieved in 2015 and 2016. The school's information about the current attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils shows an improving picture in most subjects and year groups. Nevertheless, while the proportions who are working at the standards expected in reading, writing and mathematics are increasing, their attainment remains considerably below that of other pupils nationally.
- Standards in writing are below average. Pupils have too few opportunities to write extended pieces. When pupils write in subjects other than English, the expectations teachers have of their grammar, spelling and punctuation skills are too low. This means that pupils do not spend enough time conscientiously applying and improving their writing skills.
- In key stage 2, standards in reading are below average. Teachers are not fostering a love of reading among pupils and encouraging them to read widely. Pupils lack confidence when asked to summarise the plots of books they are reading or explain the personalities and motivations of characters.
- The most able pupils do not make enough progress from their starting points. Weak teaching in the past, and a lack of consistent challenge in current teaching, means that relatively few pupils gain skills above those that are expected for their ages.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make good progress from their starting points. In some classes, provision is tailored to meet the needs of pupils who require additional support. Typically, however, the additional support provided is not helping pupils to catch up with their peers.
- The school's family support worker, learning mentor and other staff work effectively to support pupils' behavioural and emotional needs. Their interventions lead to measurable gains in pupils' self-esteem, conduct and attendance.
- The care provided for pupils with medical needs is of a good standard and ensures that these pupils are fully included in school life.

- Scores in the phonics screening check in Year 1 have been close to the national average in recent years. This reflects the effective teaching of phonics in the Reception Year and in key stage 1. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, however, who reach the expected standard is below that of other pupils.
- Pupils are successful in their sporting activities. The school uses the physical education and sport premium effectively. Pupils enjoy the increased opportunities to take part in a range of sporting activities.
- Work around the school and performance of the school choir also show good achievement in music, and in art and design.

Early years provision

Good

- Children in the Reception Year make good progress from their starting points that are below those typical for their age. By the end of the Reception Year, the proportion of pupils who achieve a good level of development is consistently in line with the national average. Disadvantaged children make similar progress to that of others, but the school does not track carefully how it is using the additional funding provided for this group.
- Learning, both inside and outside, is fun. The children's good creative and imaginative skills were evident as they worked at tasks around the theme of boats. Children concentrated fully as they made and floated model sailing boats. Other children were thoroughly enjoying themselves piloting their 'ship' to Australia. As they steered the ship's wheel and pointed into the distance, they explained how they were looking forward to seeing kangaroos and enjoying the hot weather.
- Adults have a good understanding of how young children learn effectively. For example, when teaching the children about shapes, the children enthusiastically answered questions, worked in pairs examining shapes and chanted a refrain to help them remember the number of sides of hexagons and pentagons. Once the teacher spotted a few were losing their concentration, she astutely introduced a lively counting game involving jumping and turning. Once completed, she then very successfully refocused their attention to continue the exploration of shapes.
- There is strong provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Adults ensure that, for the great majority of time, children work with their classmates. When appropriate, however, additional one-to-one support helps individuals gain the knowledge and skills necessary for them to be ready for learning in Year 1.
- Children are thoughtful and caring towards their peers. They learn happily together, taking turns to make their treats in 'The Ice Cream Cabin' and working as a team to build huge sandcastles. 'Please may I have that?' and similar remarks highlighted the respect they show each other.
- Staff are suitably trained and alert to any issues that can indicate children's well-being may be at risk. They keep a watchful eye over the children throughout the day and ensure that the children move safely between the different areas of learning.

- The leader of the early years knows the strengths of provision and where next to drive improvement. This year she has ensured that staff have benefited from effective professional training on the teaching of mathematics. Staff have also received guidance on designing activities that encourage the children to apply their literacy and numeracy skills throughout the day, as well as to investigate, explore and think.
- The leader takes care to use the strengths of the team to best effect and is improving links with local nurseries and pre-school providers. She recognises that, currently, adults do not intervene quickly enough to increase the level of challenge and extend learning when children choose their own activities.
- A small minority of parents expressed a concern about changes in staffing in the early years. The great majority, however, were very positive about the start their children are getting at St Mary's. Strategies such as 'Walk-in Wednesdays' are strengthening the partnership between school and home.

School details

Unique reference number	139463
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10031167

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	316
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Dorothy
Principal	Sarah Whitlock
Telephone number	01536 722 757
Website	http://stmaryscebl.northants.dbprimary.com/
Email address	head@stmaryscebl.info
Date of previous inspection	18–19 March 2015

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is close to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is close to the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes apart from Year 6. The great majority of pupils in Year 6 were not in school during the inspection as they were away on a residential visit.
- Inspectors looked at work in a range of pupils' books.
- Inspectors met with pupils and spoke with them about what it is like to be a pupil at St Mary's CofE Primary Academy. They also heard pupils read and observed their behaviour at breaktimes.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, other staff, three members of the governing body and with an officer from the diocese of Peterborough.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of both school days. They took into account 65 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 38 written responses made by parents.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including: the school's self-evaluation; the school's improvement plan; the school's most recent information on pupils' attainment and progress; and information relating to teaching, attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Anthony O'Malley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Moore	Ofsted Inspector
Debbie Beeston	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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