

St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Cundy Street, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S6 2WJ

Inspection dates

5–6 July 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- As a result of effective leadership and a determined drive for improvement, pupils make strong progress and achieve good outcomes.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do well because they receive the high-quality help and support they need.
- Teaching is effective because teachers have high expectations and plan learning activities which are interesting and engaging. Generally, teachers use assessment information to make sure that work is pitched at the right level for pupils. However, this is sometimes less effective and, as a result, the most able pupils are not set challenging enough work.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally well promoted. Pupils learn to value and respect other people, whoever they are and whatever their culture, faith or background.
- There are high standards of behaviour at St Mary's. Pupils behave in a thoughtful and considerate way in lessons and throughout the school day.
- Middle leaders have varying levels of leadership experience and some are new to their roles. Some have less impact on pupils' learning and the outcomes they achieve.
- Pupils make strong progress in their personal development. They work hard and want to do well. Occasionally, when the work they are set is less challenging, some pupils lose interest and drift off task. This slows the progress they make.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a broad range of interesting and thought-provoking learning experiences. It is enriched and extended by a comprehensive programme of extra-curricular activities. Some of the recent changes to the curriculum have had less impact on the outcomes achieved by pupils, especially the most able pupils.
- Senior leaders and governors keep a close eye on all areas of the school's work. Pupils' attainment is assessed accurately and monitored effectively. Senior leaders have a less precise picture of the progress pupils are making from their different starting points because the school's tracking system is new.
- Governors challenge and support the principal and senior leaders in a robust and effective way. They have an influential role in improving the quality of education at St Mary's.
- The school's early years provision is good. There has been a strong and sustained trend of improvement in the outcomes achieved by children in the Reception class.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - the school’s tracking system provides accurate information about the progress individual pupils make in all subject areas and leaders use this information to further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - middle leaders have a strong and influential role in improving the quality of education and the outcomes pupils achieve
 - the curriculum extends and challenges all pupils, especially the most able pupils, so that they develop excellent attitudes to learning and a higher proportion exceed expectations in English, mathematics, science and a wide range of other subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal, senior leaders and governors have led the school with determination and resolve through a period of significant change. They have tackled all the areas for improvement identified at the predecessor school's last inspection and won back the trust and confidence of the community they serve. Pupils told inspectors that they go to a good school and we agree with them.
- Leaders and governors have made sure that the school's inclusive values and Christian character are at the heart of everything they do. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally well promoted at St Mary's. As a result, pupils understand, accept and value people who are different, including those who have different faiths and backgrounds. The school is achieving its ambition of 'rising above the ordinary' in these crucially important aspects of pupils' learning and development.
- The principal, senior leaders and governors have high expectations and an absolute focus on achieving the best outcomes for all pupils. A notable strength is their determination to tackle the different forms of disadvantage experienced by pupils and their families. Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide the additional help and support disadvantaged pupils need. As a result, they make accelerated progress and achieve outcomes which are similar to those achieved by non-disadvantaged pupils. Importantly, pupils who join the school during the academic year, including those who speak English as an additional language, are supported effectively and make strong progress.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness because they have strong systems for monitoring the quality of education and the outcomes achieved by pupils. The principal makes sure the governing body receives detailed information about the school's performance. Importantly, governors have the knowledge and skills they need to challenge and support senior leaders effectively. Governors do not hold back when challenge is needed, but are equally robust in the way they support the principal, senior leaders and staff. The school's strategic plan is sharply focused on the areas of the school's work which need to be improved and developed further.
- Performance management is used well by senior leaders and governors to hold their colleagues to account for improving practice and securing consistently good outcomes for pupils. Teachers value the comprehensive programme of training and professional development provided by the school, especially the opportunities to work and learn alongside colleagues from other schools within the academy trust. The principal and senior leaders also work closely with leaders from other trust schools. Again, this is helping them to develop their practice and, importantly, to strengthen the systems which drive improvement at St Mary's.
- The influence of other leaders on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the outcomes pupils are achieving is more variable. This is because some are either new to their roles or are less experienced leaders. Consequently, some areas of the school's work have not improved as rapidly as others. The outcomes achieved by key stage 1 pupils, for example, are not improving as quickly as those achieved by pupils in

the early years and those in key stage 2. Also, although there is an improving picture, the outcomes achieved by the most able pupils in science and in the subjects taught within the school's 'creative curriculum' are not as strong as they could be. Too few of the most able pupils are developing their knowledge, skills and understanding at greater depth in these important subjects.

- Additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used well to improve the outcomes they achieve. In the early years and in key stages 1 and 2, pupils' needs are identified and assessed in a timely and effective way. Education, health and care plans provide detailed information about the specialist help and support pupils receive and include specific and measurable targets for pupils to work towards. Many of the parents who spoke to inspectors said that the difficulties their children experience had been spotted quickly and that the support they receive is making a positive difference.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a rich range of experiences and opportunities to develop their skills and learn about the world around them. Pupils' learning and development is extended and enriched by a wide range of clubs, educational visits and opportunities to participate in artistic and creative activities as well as individual and team sports. The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium is used well to increase levels of participation in school-based and inter-school activities and to develop teachers' knowledge and skills in teaching PE. Although improving, some areas of the curriculum have been redesigned more recently and the changes have had less impact on the outcomes achieved by pupils, especially the most able pupils.
- The school's approach to assessing pupils' attainment compared to the age-expected standards is effective. However, the system for tracking pupils' progress is new. As a result, senior leaders have a less precise understanding of the progress individual pupils and groups of pupils are making from their different starting points. In part, this is why pupils make strong rather than substantial and sustained progress in some areas of their learning and development.
- More generally, parents were extremely positive about the quality of education at St Mary's. The quality of care and support for pupils was singled out as one of the school's many strengths. A number of parents said that the school has 'improved dramatically' since its last inspection. Inspectors agree that this is the case.

Governance of the school

- Governors make an effective contribution to the school's leadership and management.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness. They are knowledgeable about all areas of the school's work because they receive detailed and helpful reports and support and challenge the principal and senior and middle leaders robustly and effectively.
- Governors have strong oversight of the school's use of additional funding, including special educational needs funding, the pupil premium and the primary PE and sport premium.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong and embedded culture of keeping pupils safe and protecting them from harm. Senior leaders and staff know pupils and their families well and are alert to the things that make them vulnerable. Records show that timely action is taken when concerns about a pupil's safety or welfare are identified. The school works closely and effectively with other services to provide the help and support pupils and their families need.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have high expectations and plan work which is closely matched to pupils' interests and their different levels of ability. Learning activities are interesting and engaging and teachers promote pupils' independence skills and their confidence and ability to work and learn cooperatively. Pupils told inspectors that lessons are 'interesting and fun' and said they 'enjoy learning new things'. The work in their books and folders shows that they enjoy learning and take pride in their work.
- Teachers have a clear picture of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding compared to the age-expected standards. They assess pupils' learning accurately and use the information they collect to inform their planning and teaching. This means that pupils build on what they know, understand and can do and, as a result, make strong gains in their learning. Occasionally, in key stage 1 classes for example, this practice is less effective. As a result, some lower-attaining pupils do not secure their knowledge and understanding before moving on to new work and some of the most able pupils do not develop and deepen their understanding quickly enough.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and achieve good outcomes. Teaching assistants know the pupils they support well and, importantly, have the subject knowledge and specialist skills needed to help them learn well and make fast progress. This is also the case for pupils who speak English as an additional language, who make equally good gains as a result of the effective support they receive.
- Teachers explain ideas and model methods clearly and well. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher explained different methods of adding and subtracting two-digit numbers before challenging pupils to use their knowledge to solve some number problems. The teacher questioned pupils skilfully and made sure those who were less confident had the additional resources and help they needed. A consistently strong feature of teaching at St Mary's is the promotion of positive attitudes to learning and the development of pupils' resilience and skills as learners. This makes an important contribution to the consistently strong progress pupils make.
- Phonics is taught well in the early years and in key stage 1. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the good outcomes pupils achieve in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Lower-attaining pupils and those who speak English as an additional language use their phonics knowledge with increasing confidence to read unfamiliar words. Importantly, pupils are challenged to use their reading and mathematics skills in a wide range of other subjects and, as a result, improve their confidence and extend

their skills. The most able pupils read confidently, fluently and with understanding as a result of the school's effective approach to teaching reading.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. In lessons, they work hard and are keen to do well. Pupils are developing the skills and qualities they need to be successful and resilient learners. Their 'teamwork' skills and ability to work and learn cooperatively are stand-out strengths. On the small number of occasions when learning activities are not pitched at the right level for lower-attaining pupils and the most able, pupils lose interest and 'switch off'. This, in turn, impacts on their learning and the progress they make.
- Pupils have complete confidence in the adults who care for them at St Mary's. They told inspectors that they feel valued and safe. Although pupils said there is no bullying at their school, they also said that they feel confident to speak to a trusted adult about anything that is bothering or worrying them.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep healthy and stay safe. They know, for example, about how to stay safe when using computers, mobile phones and the internet and they are learning about how to cross roads safely and cycle safely on the road. Pupils know about healthy eating and the importance of regular exercise. Indeed, one Year 3 pupil demonstrated his understanding of the importance of healthy eating by insisting the lead inspector had an apple for pudding to make sure he had the recommended 'five-a-day'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves sensibly and responsibly throughout the school day with minimal direction from teachers. Pupils are polite and respectful in the way they behave towards each other and many show great sensitivity and maturity in their interactions. Pupils and parents spoke proudly to inspectors about the standard of behaviour at St Mary's and, rightly, governors, leaders and staff share this pride.
- Some pupils, especially some of those who join the school during the academic year, experience greater difficulty with understanding and following the school's rules and expectations. There is a marked improvement in the behaviour of this group of pupils as a result of the school's inclusive, supportive and nurturing approach.
- In 2015/16, levels of absence increased and a higher than average proportion of disadvantaged pupils and those who receive support for their special educational needs missed too much school. Again, as a result of the school's determined action, levels of attendance have improved in 2016/17 and fewer pupils are persistently absent. There has been a notable improvement in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Crucially, leaders and governors recognise that improving attendance further is an important step in securing even

better outcomes for pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- There has been a sustained trend of improvement in the outcomes achieved by children in the early years. In 2016, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year was higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check also improved and, in 2016, was higher than the national average. Disadvantaged pupils made strong progress and a similarly high proportion achieved the expected standard at the end of Year 1. The phonics screening check results for 2017 show that an even higher proportion of current Year 1 pupils have achieved the expected standard.
- The outcomes achieved by Year 2 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics improved significantly in 2016. In mathematics, a high proportion of Year 2 pupils achieved and exceeded the expected standard. This improvement has been sustained in 2017 and current Year 2 pupils achieved similarly strong outcomes. Although a high proportion of pupils achieved the expected standard in reading and writing in 2016, fewer pupils exceeded this standard. Assessment information for current Year 2 pupils shows a similarly variable picture in reading and writing. This is because too few of the most able pupils are making rapid progress and demonstrating their knowledge, skills and understanding at greater depth.
- In 2016, the outcomes achieved by Year 6 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics also improved significantly. Year 6 pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, made consistently strong progress. The school's assessment information, the work in current Year 6 pupils' books and the 2017 test results show that this improvement has been sustained. In fact, this improvement is reflected in the standard of work in the English and mathematics books of current pupils in Years 3 to 6. Importantly, however, the work in their books from a wider range of subjects, including science, shows that some of the most able pupils do not make fast enough progress from their above average starting points.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils who join the school during the academic year and those who speak English as an additional language make rapid gains in their learning as a result of the effective and well-targeted support and help they receive. Underpinning this success are the notably strong gains these groups of pupils make in their personal development and welfare.
- The outcomes pupils are achieving at the end of key stage 2 are helping them to be well prepared for the next phase of their education at secondary school.

Early years provision

Good

- Early years provision has improved since the predecessor school's last inspection and is now good. There has been a sustained trend of improvement in the outcomes achieved by children in the Reception class, including disadvantaged children and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. From starting points which are typical for their ages, children make strong progress. In 2016, the proportion achieving

a good level of development was higher than the national average and these good outcomes have been sustained in 2017.

- The indoor and outdoor learning areas provide a rich range of experiences and learning opportunities which are closely matched to children's interests, needs and different levels of ability. Children's English and mathematics skills are promoted well in focused teaching sessions led by teachers and teaching assistants and in the activities children choose for themselves. Adults use their knowledge of how to teach phonics well. As a result, children make strong progress in this area of their learning.
- Children's starting points and their learning and progress are assessed accurately and effectively. Leaders and staff use this information to identify children who are not making fast enough progress. Any children who need additional help quickly catch up as result of the effective and well-targeted support they receive. Occasionally, adults do not use what they know about the things children can do to move them quickly on to new learning activities which will deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills. As a result, a few children achieve rather than exceed the age-expected standards in some areas of learning.
- The early years provision is a safe and nurturing environment which promotes children's personal development and welfare effectively. Expectations are high and children behave safely, responsibly and with increasing confidence and independence. Parents told inspectors that there are high standards of care and welfare at St Mary's and that they feel 'welcomed, informed and well supported' by early years leaders and staff. All statutory welfare requirements are met in the early years and safeguarding arrangements are effective.
- The principal and early years leader have an accurate view of the effectiveness of the early years provision. Much has been done to improve the provision since the predecessor school's last inspection. Since her appointment in 2014, the early years leader has worked effectively under the direction of the principal. However, systems to drive improvement without this close guidance are less developed and embedded. Senior leaders and governors know that strengthening this, and other aspects of the middle leadership, is an important next step.

School details

Unique reference number	140341
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10031938

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Rev Melanie FitzGerald
Principal	Lynn Thorne
Telephone number	0114 2344461
Website	www.st-marys.sheffield.sch.uk/
Email address	enquiries@st-marys.sheffield.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about the implementation of the governing body's policy for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- St Mary's is a smaller than average-sized primary school. It is a sponsor-led academy within the Diocese of Sheffield Academies Trust. St Mary's converted to become an academy on 1 September 2014. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2014, it was judged to require improvement.
- While many pupils are of White British heritage, over half are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Approximately one third of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- A high proportion of pupils join and leave the school within the academic year.

- The proportion of pupils who need support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities or have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is much higher than the national 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

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning on both days of the inspection. They also spoke to pupils, listened to them read and examined the work in their books. Several lessons were visited jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with pupils, parents, senior and middle leaders, four governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, and three representatives from the Diocese of Sheffield Academies Trust.
- Inspectors spoke informally to parents at the end of the school day. Inspectors took account of 27 responses recorded on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 23 written responses. There were no responses to the online pupil and staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors examined documents relating to governance, self-evaluation, school improvement planning, pupils' progress, attendance, behaviour, the curriculum and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Nick Whittaker, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Richard Knowles	Ofsted Inspector
Abigail Rourke	Ofsted Inspector

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