

St. Mary Cray Primary Academy

High Street, St. Mary Cray, Orpington, Kent BR5 4AR

Inspection dates

26–27 September 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and leadership team, strongly supported by staff, have transformed the school. Pupils receive a good education and make good progress in a friendly and welcoming environment.
- The Reception class gives children an excellent start to their education in a safe and attractive area.
- The most recent test results show that by the time they leave in Year 6, pupils are working at standards which are above the national average in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils behave well. They learn to respect each other and adults and feel safe in school.
- The curriculum provides children with a wide range of opportunities to extend their learning beyond the classroom.
- Staff work hard to ensure that pupils understand British values of tolerance, respect and belief in the rule of law.
- The Oasis Community Hub has become a key part of the school's work with families. Parents are supportive of the school and appreciate the help they receive.
- The school receives excellent support from the Spring Partnership Trust and the executive Headteacher. This has helped to drive the rapid improvement.
- Governors know the school extremely well. They are supportive but also challenge the school leaders.
- Attendance has improved considerably and is now close to the national average.
- Teaching is good overall but there are still some inconsistencies in the way in which some school policies are used and in how teachers develop pupils' language skills.
- The school is working hard to help pupils become more self-disciplined and more resilient but leaders know that there is more to do.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To build further on the success in improving the school:
 - raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by working with teachers to eliminate inconsistencies, for example in providing feedback to pupils and ensuring that teachers take every opportunity to develop pupils' language skills
 - increase both pupils' ability to be self-disciplined and their resilience so that they can make faster progress and work in greater depth.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher leads the school with great determination and skill. His clear vision has inspired staff, pupils and parents. Together with the leadership team, he has worked successfully to create a school where pupils want to learn and where they are able to experience success.
- The drive, ambition and commitment to continuing improvement is clearly evident. Senior staff, supported by the executive headteacher from the Spring Partnership Trust, evaluate the needs of the school in depth. The plans which emerge from this exercise are sharply focused with challenging but achievable targets.
- The school's work with the Spring Partnership Trust is an important factor in the school's improvement. The trust both challenges the school and provides a wide range of support services and professional development opportunities. School leaders gain from external checks by the trust and from advice on how to improve the school.
- The headteacher and the trust have been highly effective in developing the leadership qualities of staff. Senior leaders who are new in post worked alongside their predecessors last term and this has enabled a seamless transition from the previous leadership team.
- Newly appointed middle leaders have had a thorough induction. They are clear about their roles and are already taking on responsibility for building on what has been achieved.
- Staff improve their skills by working with staff from other schools in the partnership. They are highly supportive of the direction the school is taking and committed to its continuing improvement.
- Leaders and teachers regularly check pupils' progress and set targets which are challenging but which they believe their pupils can achieve. Teachers use these to plan the content of and the approach to teaching different subjects.
- The school's curriculum provides a strong framework for learning. This has been particularly effective where topics in subjects such as history and geography are used to develop pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills. The work in subjects is strongly supported by a wide range of enrichment activities available to all pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. They learn to understand some of the basic beliefs of the major world religions and to respect people of other faiths. Pupils enjoy and are keen to take part in all that is offered in art, music, drama and sport. The work with the Bromley Youth Music Trust enables pupils to learn to play an instrument and take part in concerts. This type of activity extends their knowledge and skills and also helps them learn to work well as individuals and as team members.
- The senior team believes that working successfully with families and the community is a vital element in ensuring that pupils get a good education. They are therefore focusing strongly on ensuring that the school meets the needs of the community from which it draws its pupils. The Oasis Community Hub is an important development and

parents spoke highly of the wide range of services and activities for families attached to the school and for the local community.

- Both lesson time and enrichment activities prepare pupils very well to make an active and positive contribution to British society. Elections for the school council and for class leaders help them to understand how democracy works. Visits to many different places of interest help broaden pupils' understanding of British values and a wide range of other cultures.
- The additional physical education and sports funding is used successfully. Specialist coaching helps teachers to improve their teaching of physical education. The wide range of sports gives pupils experience of different outdoor activities. Pupils say they enjoy physical education and sport and a large number take up the opportunities.
- The school wants all pupils to achieve to the best of their ability and the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is very effectively targeted. Those who may be at risk of falling behind are supported both in class and individually or in smaller groups to help them catch up.

Governance of the school

- The members of the local committee are fully involved in the life of the school. They have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and bring a good range of knowledge and skills to the work. High-quality training provided by the Spring Partnership Trust helps them to challenge and hold the leaders of the school to account effectively.
- Governors analyse and review progress and performance information against the expectations of the development plans. At the same time they are constructive and supportive, as, for example, in the work involved in setting up the Oasis Community Hub.
- Governors take their responsibility for safeguarding very seriously and have worked with leaders to establish a culture of safety in the school. They systematically monitor what the school does to ensure that statutory requirements are met and pupils are kept safe.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff make keeping children safe a high priority.
- Staff and governors receive regular and thorough training in safeguarding and they know what to do if they have any concerns, including how to identify risks around extremism and radicalisation.
- Pupils said that they felt safe in school and could explain how what they learn, for example about e-safety and the use of social media, helps them to stay safe out of school. Sensitive issues are dealt with in a way that is appropriate to pupils' level of maturity.
- Parents did not express any concerns about safety and feel that their children are well looked after.

- Record-keeping on all aspects of safeguarding is comprehensive and meticulous. Safeguarding policies are kept up to date and reviewed regularly. Liaison with a range of external agencies helps to ensure that issues are dealt with as they arise.
- Staff clearly understand that there can be links between poor attendance and safeguarding risks. Daily monitoring of attendance, and very rapid follow-up, help staff respond quickly to any concerns and where necessary put support into place.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good and lesson time is used well to ensure that pupils make good progress. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and encourage them to work hard.
- Pupils generally respond well to teachers' expectations and most make at least good progress. Leaders and teachers know, however, that more needs to be done to develop pupils' resilience and their ability to persevere and overcome difficulties.
- Teachers make the learning intentions clear so that pupils know what to expect in lessons. Questions are designed to make pupils think in depth and often to encourage them to share their ideas in lessons. This is not always consistent enough to develop pupils' speaking skills.
- The school has a straightforward approach to providing feedback on how well pupils have done and how they can improve their work. This has helped to raise standards. Pupils understand how the system works and are given time to respond to feedback, but the quality of the response is variable.
- Leaders check carefully on the quality of teaching and support teachers and teaching assistants well. Regular discussions about pupils' attainment and progress help teachers to plan work which is accurately matched to pupils' needs. This works well, though occasionally some work is too difficult for some and too easy for others.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) has improved greatly in recent years and most pupils become fluent and confident readers. Effective guided reading sessions in small groups ensure that teachers match books to the needs of individual pupils.
- Teachers use work in other subjects to give pupils opportunities to use their reading and writing skills. For example, the work in a Year 2 guided reading lesson supported work in the history lesson on the Great Fire of London and Samuel Pepys' diary. Pupils have access to a good range of books and the most able pupils are encouraged to challenge themselves.
- Classrooms are well organised for learning and pupils have access to a range of good quality resources. Displays not only show pupils' work, they are used to support pupils' learning. For example, the mathematics working walls give pupils a quick point of reference if they need a reminder about how to tackle a task.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are good and encourage a strong working atmosphere. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively in lessons to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who are at an early stage of learning English. This has developed pupils' positive attitudes towards school and their

willingness to learn.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and have good attitudes towards learning. In the Reception class, children who had only just started school were enjoying the activities. Year 6 pupils were confident when explaining the challenge in writing a letter to a soldier in the First World War. They talked about style and vocabulary and how it was different from what they would write today. This confidence was not, however, consistent across the school and some pupils struggled to explain their ideas.
- Pupils are very confident that teachers will support them. The school has excellent systems to help staff to identify issues which are preventing pupils from learning and the support is closely tailored to individual needs. The impact of this is seen in greatly improved attendance, better behaviour and much higher standards in academic work.
- The 'nurture group' in key stage 1 and 'The Pod' in key stage 2 make provision for pupils who, for a variety of reasons, may be finding school difficult. In these areas, staff give pupils the additional care and support that they need.
- The work with pupils on dealing with bullying has been helpful. Pupils know about different types of bullying, including the misuse of social media and what to do should it occur. Pupil surveys indicate that most pupils believe that if any bullying is reported, it will be dealt with quickly. School records show very few incidents and surveys of parents indicate that they feel bullying is dealt with effectively.
- Pupils said that they are consulted and that their views are taken seriously. They could point to areas such as the reward system and improving the school environment where they had a real influence. In addition to an elected school council, in each key stage 2 class pupils choose English and mathematics champions and digital leaders to help promote high standards and excellent progress in these areas.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Adults set high standards and are consistent in their approach to managing behaviour. As a result, pupils are polite, friendly and respectful and are at ease with adults and other pupils. Serious issues are very rare and the occasional low-level misbehaviour is very quickly dealt with and not allowed to affect learning.
- Pupils are being encouraged to be self-disciplined and take responsibility for their own behaviour and actions. Most are responding very well to this, though some are still finding it difficult.
- Pupils move sensibly around the building. The playground is well supervised, which helps to ensure that any minor incidents are not allowed to escalate. Pupils are lively but they generally get on well with each other and play happily.
- Pupils know how important it is to come to school regularly as this helps them to make

good progress. Attendance used to be very low compared with other schools but as a result of intensive work with pupils and families, it is now close to the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good, and sometimes excellent, progress over time. Current information shows that most pupils are working at the standard expected for their age and some are above age-related expectations.
- Disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English make similar progress to other pupils in the school.
- In 2017, provisional information showed that by the end of key stage 1 pupils were working at broadly the expected standards for their age. Year 6 pupils made much better than expected progress in reading and mathematics and largely caught up from previous underachievement. Provisional results in the Year 6 reading and mathematics tests were well above the national average.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, do well and almost all achieve high standards in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2.
- Outcomes in writing were not quite as good in 2017 as they were in reading and mathematics. Progress and attainment in writing is a key priority for school leaders and writing is a focus for staff training. Books and plans show that pupils are being given more opportunities to write in subjects such as history, geography and religious education as well as in English.
- There have been some inconsistencies in previous years in the rate of progress in core subjects. Teachers and senior leaders have analysed these reasons for the differences and have set ambitious targets for future progress. For example, expectations for progress in key stage 1 have been increased. The impact of this is already being seen in lessons, where expectations for the quality and quantity of work are higher.
- Results in the phonics screening check have improved considerably and are now well above the national results. This has had a positive effect on reading standards. Pupils use their knowledge of phonics to work out unfamiliar words. They enjoy reading and most learn to read fluently and with expression. Pupils at all stages talked knowledgeably about the books they had read.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- At the time of the inspection, the children were in only their second week of full time attendance. They had settled very well and had already learned the basic class routines, for example tidying up at the end of an activity. This helps them to become independent and able to look after themselves.
- Visits to the school in the summer term as well as home visits help staff and children to get to know each other. They also help parents to understand what to expect. Parents speak very highly of the Reception class. They say that their children settle quickly and thoroughly enjoy school. As one parent said, her child 'can't wait' and 'bounds in'.
- The children relate well to others, learning to play happily together and share toys and

equipment. Relationships with adults are warm and children trust adults to look after them.

- The classroom and the outdoor area are vibrant and colourful. They are very well organised to stimulate children's curiosity as well as helping them to acquire essential skills in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, children make outstanding progress across all areas of learning.
- No time is wasted and routine activities are used to support learning, for example counting the number of children present and working out how many are absent.
- In a lively session based on 'We're going on a bear hunt' by Michael Rosen, the children used the sounds they had already learned to sound out new words. The most able children were writing their own words using the sounds they had learned. Similarly, in mathematics children were using 'stepping stones' confidently in the outdoor area to learn to count forwards and backwards from 1 to 20.
- Pupils who have just started Year 1 have benefited greatly from their time in Reception. They are confident and are adapting very rapidly to more formal education. Many of them started Reception from a relatively low base, particularly in speech and language, but by the end of the year they had made such good progress that their knowledge and skills were broadly typical for their age.
- Children from disadvantaged backgrounds make progress which is at least as good as others. Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are taught very effectively because their needs are understood and they, too, make excellent progress.
- The early years leader is knowledgeable and skilled in planning the Reception class curriculum. She assesses the children's capabilities and previous experience in depth and is quick to adjust the teaching and the approach to take account of individual and group differences. She makes sure that all adults are well trained to provide the teaching and support that the children need.

School details

Unique reference number	141117
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	10036280

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	228
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Julie Colvill
Executive headteacher	Jo Brinkley
Headteacher	Adam Lowing
Telephone number	01689 826081
Website	www.st-marycray.bromley.sch.uk
Email address	admin@st-marycray.bromley.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 complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- St. Mary Cray Primary Academy is an average-sized primary school. Since the autumn term of 2014 it has been part of the Spring Partnership Trust, a group of six primary schools in the London Borough of Bromley. An executive headteacher from the trust has oversight of the school.
- The current headteacher has been in post since September 2014. Two assistant headteachers took up their posts this term.
- About half the school are of White British origin. The other pupils come from a wide

range of ethnic backgrounds. About a quarter of the pupils speak English as an additional language.

- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is above average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than in most schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited all classes during the inspection at least once and most were visited twice. Observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher and an assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors observed an assembly, morning and lunchtime breaks and pupils' activities before school.
- A meeting was held with members of the school council and a group of pupils who are the English and mathematics champions and digital leaders in key stage 2 classes. Many other pupils were spoken with during lessons and breaktimes. The inspectors also listened to some pupils reading.
- The inspection team met a group of governors and the executive headteacher from the Spring Partnership Trust.
- Inspectors held meetings with a several school staff, including the subject leaders in English and mathematics.
- Inspectors took account of the responses on the Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff and the responses on Parent View (Ofsted's online survey). The team also took account of the school's own surveys of pupils, staff and parents and spoke informally with a number of parents.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including pupils' work; the school data on progress; school improvement planning; leaders' checks on the quality of teaching; external checks on the quality of education; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Grace Marriott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Angela Trigg

Ofsted Inspector

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