

# St Andrew's CofE Primary School

Sand Street, Soham, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 5AA

## Inspection dates

11–12 October 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Effective leadership by the headteacher has ensured that the school has improved rapidly. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher.
- Governance is a strength of the school. Governors are committed to and ambitious for the school. Governors provide good support and challenge to leaders because they have a clear strategic view of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- The trust checks the work of the school carefully. Trust members have supported leaders and governors effectively in securing improvements.
- Leaders have rightly focused on improving the quality of teaching, which is now good throughout the school.
- Teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve and so plan challenging lessons. Additional adults work closely with teachers to ensure that all pupils make good progress in lessons from their starting points.
- Pupils' behaviour is typically courteous and respectful. They behave well in lessons and during less-structured times of the day, such as lunchtime. Parents and staff agree that pupils' behaviour is good.
- Pupils said that they feel safe in school and the overwhelming majority of parents agree. Safeguarding procedures are effective.
- The school reinforces the importance of regular attendance. While lower than that seen nationally, attendance for the small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities showed a marked improvement in 2017.
- Outcomes for pupils have improved. In 2017, overall standards rose at the end of Reception and in the phonics screening check. In key stage 1, overall standards in reading and mathematics have also improved.
- The early years provision is good. Children enjoy coming to school and behave well.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has improved. However, teachers do not always give pupils sufficient opportunities to practise writing at length in science and in the foundation subjects.
- Some middle leaders do not fully understand their roles in the strategic leadership of the school, or make effective contribution to it.
- Feedback from staff in pupils' books is not consistently in line with the school's marking policy.

## Full report

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

- Improve the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that the school's marking policy is consistently applied.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - developing regular opportunities for pupils in all year groups to write at length in science and in the foundation subjects
  - ensuring that middle leaders take a more strategic role in the leadership of the school.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Since his appointment in September 2016, the determined leadership of the headteacher has made an enormous contribution to improvements in the school. He is ably assisted by the deputy headteacher and, together, they present a clear plan for the future development of the provision.
- Parents are happy with the education that the school provides and said that their children are taught well, feel safe and enjoy school. Almost all the parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, said that they would recommend the school to others. One parent spoke for many in saying that, 'St Andrew's is a well-led, friendly school. My son is thriving here. I am always impressed by the quality of the teaching and support. The staff are all fantastic and they are capably led by the headteacher.'
- There is an unremitting focus on improving the quality of teaching at St Andrew's. This is underpinned by an accurate and thorough self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The self-evaluation draws on a range of evidence including the views of parents and pupils.
- The Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust monitors the school carefully. It has brought systematic rigour to the self-evaluation process through the diocesan review visits, which challenge the school to continue to make improvements. Alongside this challenge, the trust has provided bespoke, high-quality support to enable staff and governors to improve the school. This has included mentor support for senior staff, access for the special educational needs coordinator to educational psychologists and the commissioning of external audits of the special needs provision.
- At St Andrew's, pupils are taught across a wide range of subjects. Work in books and displays around the school show the breadth of pupils' learning, ranging from models of the movements of the planets to participation in the 'sing for your school' event at the Cambridge Corn Exchange. The curriculum also helps to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills effectively in different subjects, for example, by reinforcing the correct application of semi-colons in extended writing in a history lesson about World War 2.
- Pupils have many opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and so they are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They spoke to inspectors about their enjoyment of learning about religions, such as Judaism, Hinduism and Islam, and about their participation in activities, including a visit to the Houses of Parliament, and in the school's debating club.
- Governors and senior leaders make effective use of performance management procedures to improve teaching. Teachers' targets are closely matched to both the needs of the individual and the school. Almost all staff who responded to the staff survey agreed that the school uses professional development to encourage, challenge and support teachers' improvement. This helps staff to continue to improve outcomes for pupils.
- The school makes effective use of additional funding from the physical education (PE) and sport premium. Staff receive training to improve their skills and confidence in

teaching PE. Equally good use is made of this funding to offer pupils more opportunities to take part in competitive sport such as tag rugby and athletics, through the local sports partnership.

- Pupil premium funding is used effectively. Consequently, the achievement of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium is rising, in particular, across key stage 2 where the gap between this group's attainment and that of other pupils nationally is reducing.
- Funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used effectively. The special educational needs coordinator knows pupils well and ensures that appropriate support is provided for those who need it. Parents with children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities praised the school for the support that it gives. One parent, speaking for many, said that the school is 'fantastic' and has 'supported and helped my child to become confident'.
- Although pupils' progress in writing by the end of Year 6 improved in 2017, opportunities are not consistent for pupils, in all year groups, to write at length in science and across the foundation subjects. Consequently, not all pupils are able to develop their writing skills in a wide range of contexts.
- While most middle leaders share the headteacher's high expectations, they do not all have a clear understanding of their roles as strategic leaders, or of the ways in which this should make a positive difference to pupils' development in their areas of responsibility.

## **Governance of the school**

- The local governing body is a strength of the school and is ambitious about its future. Governors bring a relevant range of expertise and knowledge that helps to provide effective challenge and support. As a consequence, they have been instrumental in improving the school.
- Governors use a range of evidence to evaluate leaders' work, including detailed reports from the headteacher, external audits and regular visits to the school. All of this enables governors to provide leaders with the right balance of support and challenge because they have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust knows the school well. It works closely with the local governing body, in regular diocesan review meetings, to challenge the school's performance and to instigate improvements. One local governor highlighted the impact of diocesan reviews when she said that, 'The first few of these were a real shake up – in a positive way!'
- Local governors specifically highlighted the good support that they received from the trust in recruiting the new headteacher and in a restructuring of staff. They linked the impact of this support with improvements in teaching and the improved outcomes for pupils in 2017. They appreciate the autonomy that the trust allows them in fulfilling their responsibilities as a local governing body.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A strong safeguarding culture exists within the school. All necessary checks are undertaken when recruiting new staff. Records are detailed and accurate. Information is recorded appropriately on the school's single central record. This meets all statutory requirements.
- Procedures for staff to follow if they have any concerns about a child or adult are clear. Any concerns are acted on quickly. Safeguarding leaders make appropriate referrals to relevant external agencies when necessary and are mindful of some delays and limitations in feedback when working with local social services. Despite these challenges, the school's record-keeping is detailed and thorough. The designated safeguarding lead ensures that vulnerable pupils are well supported by the school and that work with families is effective.
- Staff are up to date with all government safeguarding guidance, including the 'Prevent' duty, which identifies the support available to pupils who are vulnerable to extremism or radicalisation. A range of services, including an external counselling service, are used to support pupils emotionally and academically.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teaching at St. Andrew's is good. The vast majority of parents agree that teaching is good and that their children make good progress in the school.
- Teachers have high expectations and plan exciting lessons that build on pupils' interests. Pupils respond to these expectations and make good progress across the school. This is because they listen carefully, settle quickly and put effort into classroom tasks in order to produce work of a good standard.
- Teaching assistants have a clear role in lessons and skilfully support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They have a clear understanding of pupils' learning needs and of the tasks they are set.
- Teachers use clear, focused questioning in lessons to challenge pupils' understanding. In a key stage 2 lesson on methods of multiplication and division, for example, careful use of questioning by the teacher allowed the pupils to be secure in their understanding of these operations for numbers in the tens, hundreds and thousands. Consequently, pupils were confident and able to deepen their understanding when reviewing their work and correcting any errors in it.
- School staff stress the importance of learning from mistakes. In some lessons, teachers deliberately use errors on the board or in written work to be corrected by pupils as a talking point in the lesson. For example, in a Year 1 writing lesson, pupils enthusiastically pointed out errors in pirate 'Harry the Hook's' sentence. As a result, pupils feel safe to take risks and are not worried when they get something wrong. One pupil highlighted the benefits of this approach when she said to inspectors, 'I like mistakes because that's how you learn.'
- Reading is taught well across the school. The teaching of phonics is effective. Pupils make good use of their phonological knowledge to read new words. The attainment of

Year 1 pupils in the phonics screening check has improved and is now above that seen nationally.

- While some good examples of writing at length were seen in science and in the foundation subjects during the inspection, these opportunities were not offered regularly in lessons across the school.
- There are inconsistencies in the application of the school's marking policy. Consequently, pupils do not always use the feedback given by teachers well, or understand fully what they need to do to improve.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils said that they feel safe in school. Pupils told inspectors that they are taught about what is right and what is wrong in personal, social and health education, including about making the right choices. This is enhanced through the use of visitors, for example from children's charity organisations, to speak to pupils about different types of abuse and what to do if they have worries.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of digital safety, ranging from not sharing passwords, to the dangers that they could face online and whom to go to if they have concerns.
- Almost all the parents who responded to Parent View agreed that pupils are safe and well looked after at this school. They said that incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively. Many parents commented on the strength of support in the school, for example, as one of them said, 'I feel that they genuinely care about my child's well-being.'

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave responsibly around school. They are very polite and well mannered in their dealings with their peers or with adults. At break and lunchtimes, they play sensibly and collaboratively with each other. As a result, there is a calm and orderly atmosphere throughout the school, including in the dining room.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. In almost all classes seen by inspectors, the pupils listened attentively to the teacher and to each other. For example, in a Year 2 class pupils listened respectfully to each other as different groups presented their ideas for an alternative version of the story of 'Goldilocks and the three bears'. In the rare instances when behaviour is poor, it is because pupils are not clear about what teachers expect from them.
- The school has taken effective action to improve attendance. Consequently, the overall attendance rate for pupils has risen since September 2016 and is now in line with the national figures. The attendance of some groups of pupils, such as those who have

special educational needs and/or disabilities, is lower than the national average but is showing rapid improvement.

- The overwhelming majority of parents and staff agree that the behaviour of pupils is good.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Outcomes have improved because of leaders' and governors' successful actions to eliminate weak teaching in the past. Work in pupils' books and the school's current assessment information show that standards are improving throughout the school.
- Pupils achieve well in the early years setting and the proportion securing a good level of development typically exceeds the national average. The majority of children, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress from their starting points in specific areas such as space, shape and measure, reading and number. This prepares them well for the next stage of their education.
- In 2017, key stage 1 pupils improved their achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Overall standards are now in line with, or higher than, national averages except for pupils making expected progress in writing.
- By the end of key stage 2, in 2017, unvalidated assessment information shows that pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has improved on the previous year. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics is now higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils exceeding the expected standard in reading and mathematics has also risen. While the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is lower, it is improving in relation to other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, in particular in reading, although this is often from lower starting points. They are well known to the special educational needs coordinator and their progress is carefully monitored.
- Provision for the most able pupils is improving. As a consequence, the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6 has increased.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. During the inspection, the whole of Year 6 spent a day at the local village college to prepare for the transition to secondary school.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The quality of education in the early years is good.
- Leaders have created a setting that is clearly child centred. The indoor and outdoor spaces are well organised and offer learning opportunities for the children across the breadth of the curriculum. The inviting environment encourages children to be curious and to take an active interest in their learning. Consequently, children initiate their own learning through practical, first-hand experiences. For example, children enjoyed

finding pieces in the sand and excitedly showed an inspector how they could be added together in different amounts to create a range of one- and two-digit numbers.

- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils are kept safe in the Nursery and Reception classes because all welfare requirements are met.
- The quality of teaching is good and children enjoy coming to school. This is because teachers plan activities that build on children's interests and encourage them to sustain concentration through their choice of learning activity.
- Staff are enthusiastic and encouraging with the children. They use effective questioning during teacher-led and child-initiated activities to extend learning opportunities. As a result, the children enjoy their learning.
- The behaviour of the children is good. They respond appropriately to each other and to adults who work with them.
- Outcomes for children at the end of Reception Year have risen since 2014. While the proportion achieving a good level of development was below the national average previously, it has improved over time and is now above the national average. This is a result of good teaching, which ensures that the children are well prepared to start Year 1.
- The achievement made by the small number of children in receipt of free school meals, or who have a special educational need and/or disability, has been inconsistent over recent years. Leaders are rigorously addressing this aspect of improvement.
- The school works well with parents and holds regular events for them. Consequently, they are positive about the school and the experiences of their children.
- Transition between Nursery and Reception are good. The classes are situated alongside each other so that children can move easily between them and become familiar with the different environments. As a result, children are well prepared for the next steps in their education.



## School details

|                                     |                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Unique reference number             | 141552                                                                                 |
| Local authority                     | Cambridgeshire                                                                         |
| Inspection number                   | 10036243                                                                               |
| Type of school                      | Primary                                                                                |
| School category                     | Academy converter                                                                      |
| Age range of pupils                 | 3 to 11                                                                                |
| Gender of pupils                    | Mixed                                                                                  |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 470                                                                                    |
| Appropriate authority               | Board of trustees                                                                      |
| Chair                               | Mrs Nicola Masters                                                                     |
| Headteacher                         | Mr Michael Harrison                                                                    |
| Telephone number                    | 01353 720345                                                                           |
| Website                             | <a href="http://www.st-andrews-pri.cambs.sch.uk">www.st-andrews-pri.cambs.sch.uk</a>   |
| Email address                       | <a href="mailto:head@st-andrews-pri.cambs.sch.uk">head@st-andrews-pri.cambs.sch.uk</a> |
| Date of previous inspection         | Not previously inspected                                                               |

## Information about this school

- The school met the government's floor standards in 2016, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- St Andrew's is larger than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan or statement is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.

- The headteacher took up his current position in September 2016.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited classes in every year across the school at least once, observing teaching and learning, talking to pupils and assessing the quality of their work. The headteacher and deputy headteacher accompanied the inspectors on some classroom visits. There were also a number of shorter visits to lessons.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, information on pupils' attainment and progress, records of behaviour and safety, governor monitoring records and safeguarding documents.
- Inspectors looked at examples of pupils' written work across a range of subjects and year groups. The inspector also separately scrutinised a range of pupils' work including English, mathematics, religious education and science books.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, pupils, governors and the diocese. Inspectors also listened to pupils read. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at playtime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils and were available to speak to parents on the playground. They also considered 71 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View.

## Inspection team

|                              |                  |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| James Adkins, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Ashley Best-White            | Ofsted Inspector |
| Stewart Caplen               | Ofsted Inspector |

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