

St Mark's CofE Junior School, Salisbury

Somerset Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 3BL

Inspection dates

7–8 November 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Until very recently, leaders have not taken effective action to ensure that pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Governors are not sufficiently strategic or robust in checking key priorities of the school. The information they hold is not always used well to help drive improvements.
- Leaders' strategies to improve academic outcomes, including those of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, have not been effective.
- Leaders previously have not used assessment information well enough to check pupils' progress from their prior attainment. This has led to slow progress for some cohorts, which had not been identified quickly enough.
- Leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching are overly positive. Leaders' judgements have not taken enough account of pupils' progress and have led to complacency in the overall view of the quality of teaching.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good across the school. This leads to stalling in the rates of progress that some pupils make.
- Teachers do not consistently use what they know about pupils to build effective sequences of learning.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of pupils' writing, especially their handwriting and spelling skills. As a result, the overall quality of pupils' writing suffers.
- Pupils lack confidence in problem solving or being able to apply their mathematical skills and knowledge in a range of situations.

The school has the following strengths

- Recent appointments to the leadership team are having an immediate and positive impact. Leaders' ambition is already improving teaching and learning across the school.
- Leaders' revision of the behaviour policy is strongly improving behaviour, which is good. Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school.
- Safeguarding is effective.*
- Pupils enjoy a full range of activities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Leaders promote a strong culture of reading. As a result, current pupils show an enjoyment of books and their reading skills are starting to improve well.
- Leaders maintain strong relationships with and support of parents and the wider community.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning to ensure that pupils make good progress and reach the standards of which they are capable, by:
 - ensuring that teachers use what they know about pupils to plan high-quality sequences of work to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding, particularly in writing and mathematics
 - improving the accuracy of spelling and quality of handwriting across the school
 - strengthening pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics
 - continuing to build on the recent improvements in pupils' reading skills.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing the skills and understanding of governors in holding leaders rigorously to account for pupils' achievement
 - robustly checking and evaluating the newly implemented strategies to accelerate pupils' progress, including that of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.

An external review of governance and of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not taken effective action to ensure that pupils make good progress by the time they leave Year 6. This has led to declining outcomes since the school opened as an academy in January 2015.
- Leaders' strategies to raise achievement have not been effective in securing good outcomes, including for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. However, recently appointed leaders who take responsibility for these areas have quickly gained an accurate view of the school and what needs to be done to secure the necessary improvement.
- Until recently, leaders have not used assessment information well enough to improve teaching and learning. In particular, they have not been sufficiently focused or rigorous in measuring pupils' progress from their prior attainment at the end of key stage 1. As a result, teachers and leaders have not ensured that pupils make strong progress. However, the newly appointed deputy headteacher is effective and is already improving systems and processes to take full account of pupils' starting points.
- Leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching are overly generous. These have not been checked well enough against pupils' outcomes. Consequently, leaders have been too slow to identify or respond to weaknesses in teaching, learning and assessment as or when they arise.
- Recent appointments to the leadership team in September 2017 are beginning to impact well on teaching and learning. The four new leaders – the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), the leader for disadvantaged learners and the mathematics subject leader – have quickly identified the right areas for improvement.
- The formation of the new leadership team is starting to have a positive impact. Its effective joined-up approaches are beginning to support pupils well. For example, the SENCo and leader for disadvantaged learners have worked closely to agree measurable and well-targeted support plans for identified pupils. However, it is too soon to see the full impact of this work on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders have appropriate plans and actions for improvement. For example, following an analysis of past papers, the mathematics leader has rightly identified the need to improve pupils' reasoning skills. This has led to the correct identification of professional development and training needs for staff, including teachers and teaching assistants.
- Leaders ensure that the performance of teachers is well managed and linked to the school's priorities. In particular, the pay policy is applied rigorously and equitably during annual appraisal meetings and reviews.
- Leaders are effective in promoting a strong ethos to support pupils in aspects of their preparation for life in modern Britain. The curriculum ensures that pupils reflect continually on their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Additional roles for pupils such as sports leaders and class ambassadors ensure that pupils are valued

and make contributions to the running of the school.

- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced. As a result, pupils enjoy the full range of subjects and experiences. For example, pupils receive discrete physical education (PE), music and information technology (IT) lessons, which they enjoy and which add variety across the day. The content of the curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs.
- School leaders engage well with external support and challenge. For example, a recent 'peer challenge' review undertaken in October 2017 provided an intensive and robust examination of the school's work. This found some key areas for improvement, which leaders have started to respond to.
- Leaders have established positive relationships with parents, who have confidence in them. The overwhelming majority of parents would recommend the school and are strong advocates of its place and purpose in the local community.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has not been effective in preventing declining outcomes since the academy conversion. Some evaluations have been overly generous, which demonstrates that governors have not always acted with the urgency required in challenging school leaders.
- Governors are not sufficiently rigorous or strategic in tackling key weaknesses. Despite having a governors' action plan, they do not track priorities or check the impact of their work on pupils' outcomes precisely enough. Consequently, their challenge to leaders has not brought about the improvement for pupils that has been needed.
- Governors have not checked the impact of the pupil premium rigorously enough previously. However, the spending is now appropriately designated to staffing and educational support for pupils. The current leader for disadvantaged learners is well focused and can already show recent improvement in pupils' attendance, behaviour and learning.
- Governors show a strong financial commitment to supporting pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. However, the additional funding is having a variable and inconsistent impact on pupils' outcomes. A new SENCo has been appointed, and in the short time since she has arrived she has started to hold joint meetings with parents and pupils to implement detailed and robust support plans for all pupils.
- Governors' use of the additional PE and sports funding is effective. Pupils enjoy a wide variety of sporting activities and extra-curricular clubs to maintain healthy lifestyles and participation in sport.
- Governors are enthusiastic and willing. They are keen to 'get it right' and are an appreciated and visible body in the school. For example, they undertake school visits to talk with pupils and staff. Minutes also show that they are proactive in asking questions of leaders during various meetings. As a result, they have integrity and are valued by staff, pupils and parents in their work.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that checks and vetting procedures are fully in place, including for staff, volunteers, governors and visitors. In addition, mandatory training in current child protection procedures has been provided for all staff. As a result, those who work in or visit the school have a good understanding of how to refer pupils to the designated safeguarding leaders if they feel they need to.
- Staff have a good understanding of how to listen and respond to pupils. They show a keen awareness of how to look after pupils and have their trust. Pupils said that they feel safe and find staff approachable. Similarly, staff engage effectively with parents to ensure that pupils are well supported, for example, in working with the parent support adviser to improve attendance and emotional well-being.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding pupils. Staff take a shared and collective responsibility with the view that protecting pupils is a priority. They know how to refer any concerns and what to do if they need to apply the whistle blowing policy.
- Leaders are tenacious and diligent in their work to look after pupils. For example, they have informed the local authority when they have concerns about pupils being absent from school for too long. They keep accurate and orderly records so that pupils can be monitored effectively where there are any concerns.
- Staff act in a timely and proportionate way to keep pupils safe. They also ensure that pupils are well taught and have the skills to be independent and make the right choices to stay safe. For example, pupils in Year 3 told an inspector what to do if they had any concerns when working online and how to report suspicious activity.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good enough across the school. Despite year groups or classes with clear strengths, too much variability hinders pupils' progress so that they do not always make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not routinely use the information they have, or what they know about the pupils, well enough to plan lessons or sequences of work to build well on their prior learning. This slows the rates of progress that some pupils make over time.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of pupils' writing. As a result, pupils' spelling and handwriting often are not good enough. Furthermore, errors or misconceptions are not identified or addressed by teachers so pupils continue to make the same mistakes.
- Teachers do not provide sufficient high-quality opportunities to develop pupils' thinking and reasoning skills in mathematics. This means that pupils lack confidence or struggle to apply concepts or solve problems. Leaders have identified this and are already working with teachers to deepen pupils' understanding and knowledge in mathematics.

- Until recently, teachers have not given enough consideration to pupils' prior starting points when tracking or checking their progress over time. This means that when pupils have made slow progress this has not always been identified quickly enough to enable them to catch up. This has led to gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, teachers are now taking firm account of pupils' prior attainment to be able to check the progress they are making.
- Teachers have positive relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning and like their lessons. In particular, pupils respond well when they work together to solve problems or discuss particular challenges.
- Teachers and teaching assistants ask a range of interesting questions and provide valuable prompts to challenge pupils of all abilities. Pupils are encouraged to find answers for themselves and are not overly reliant on adult support. Consequently, pupils are gaining independence and show a willingness to take responsibility in their learning.
- Teachers make strong links across the curriculum. For example, in a Year 6 science lesson pupils were making notes and recording their observations, and in a Year 3 history lesson pupils were imagining what it would have been like in the Stone Age. As a consequence, pupils are able to transfer skills to a variety of contexts and find enjoyment in the breadth of learning.
- Teaching promotes a strong reading culture, which is motivating pupils to enjoy books and literature. Pupils are positive about their reading and are keen to talk about this. Teaching ensures that reading is a central part of daily lessons, for example mathematics, in which pupils are reading and are required to understand worded problems.

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 are well supported to feel happy and safe. They show a good understanding of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and said that this is not tolerated by staff. They also said that they have confidence in staff, who deal quickly and decisively with disputes.
- Pupils show respect, kindness and tolerance towards one another. They are proud of their school and are keen to make positive contributions to the school and beyond. For example, pupils have raised money for charities, including Water Aid and Children in Need.
- Staff and pupils enjoy mutual respect. There are positive and harmonious relationships in the school, which are modelled well by the adults.
- Pupils are keen to learn and cooperate. They are willing to help each other when they get stuck in lessons. For example, some Year 3 boys worked well together to overcome a problem in an IT lesson on coding.

- Pupils sometimes become distracted and lose focus in parts of lessons, especially when work is not well matched to their needs. At these times, their progress slows and their interest wanes.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders have recently revised the behaviour policy. This has resulted in a consistent approach with agreed expectations of pupils across the school day. Pupils have responded positively and incidents of anti-social behaviour have fallen significantly.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school, including at breaktimes and at play. They reflect the school's values and are inclusive and welcoming towards all others.
- Leaders and staff have worked effectively to improve pupils' overall attendance, which is above the national average. Pupils are punctual and well prepared for lessons. The school's strategy of working with parents to reduce absence and improve punctuality is working well.
- Staff are effective in working with vulnerable pupils and their families. Although the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is still below that of other non-disadvantaged pupils, this figure is skewed by a few particularly complex cases. The emotional literacy support adviser and parent support adviser work well with senior leaders to strongly improve the personal, social and emotional well-being of identified pupils.
- Teachers do not consistently challenge pupils about the quality and care seen in some workbooks. As a result, there are times when some pupils do not take enough pride in the presentation of their work seen, for example, in their handwriting, topic and science books. This reduces the overall quality, impression and standard of work being presented.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Consecutive years of poor progress in pupils' end of key stage 2 reading, writing and mathematics results are described by leaders, including governors, as 'not good enough'. The school's performance in pupils' progress has fallen into at least the lowest 20% of schools nationally, even taking into account the contextual information and concerns of leaders for the most recent 2017 national tests.
- Pupils' spelling, including their application of phonics in writing, is weak throughout the school. This affects all pupils, including the most able pupils. Pupils lack confidence and knowledge to spell accurately, which holds them back in terms of the quality of their overall writing.
- Pupils' handwriting is not consistently good enough. Although some pupils, particularly those in Years 3 and 4, write well in a legible and cursive style, too many pupils are not producing the quality of handwriting of which they are capable. This element prevents too many pupils from gaining the fluency and confidence needed to write sustained and free-flowing pieces of writing, especially some of the older pupils.

- Pupils are not always confident to use and apply their existing knowledge in mathematics, especially when problem solving. They sometimes lack the reasoning and thinking skills to break mathematical problems down and apply what they already know. This slows the rates of progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not making enough good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In particular, the lower-attaining pupils are not consistently catching up quickly enough. The most able disadvantaged pupils are not reaching the higher standards of which they are capable.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not consistently make good progress. In particular, the progress of pupils who have identified difficulties in cognition and learning, as well as those who need support with communication and interaction, are a focus of leaders. Renewed strategies and approaches, including interventions, are now targeting pupils who have particular needs, to improve their progress.
- Workbooks show that there is an inconsistency and inequality in outcomes across the curriculum. For example, writing in subjects other than English, such as religious education and science, often shows a reduction in the quality of work. Outcomes for pupils are not equal across subjects and classes. However, inspectors noted a general improvement in pupils' books since September 2017.
- Pupils entering the school predominantly from the feeder infant school get a good start. Work in pupils' books shows that the majority of pupils settle well and begin to make good progress in Year 3 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported to make comparatively strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They not only keep up with their peers but often do better. Those few who start to fall behind are now being identified through the school's tracking and reporting systems.
- Pupils are well supported and enjoy reading. Current pupils are reading with increasing fluency and confidence, including those who need to catch up quickly. Teachers and teaching assistants know which pupils need further support, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities. They target resources effectively so that pupils' competence and confidence in reading are starting to improve well.

School details

Unique reference number	141645
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10036967

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	363
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Roy Bexon
Headteacher	Gareth Flemington
Telephone number	01722 333497
Website	www.st-marks.wilts.sch.uk
Email address	admin@st-marks.wilts.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.
- The school meets the government's floor standards.
- The school converted to become an academy in January 2015. Trustees and leaders are currently rewriting the articles and amending the scheme of delegation in readiness for changes to these due to take effect in January 2018.
- The school shares a campus with the other schools in the Somerset Road Education Trust. These include St Mark's Church of England Junior, Wyndham Park infant school

and Exeter House special school.

- The overwhelming majority of pupils entering the school come from Wyndham Park infant school.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium is lower than the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classes to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school day, including arrangements for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time and provision in the afternoons.
- Meetings were held with the range of leaders to evaluate their work. These included: the headteacher and deputy headteacher; representatives of the governing body; other leaders such as the SENCo and leader for disadvantaged learners; the mathematics and English subject leaders; and the school's emotional literacy support adviser and parent support adviser. A telephone conversation was held with the school's purchased improvement adviser.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents including any recent reports of governor visits and the governor action plan, assessment information, the school's self-evaluation, the 'peer challenge' review, anonymised performance management records and the school development plan.
- Documentation including the school's single central record and record of child protection training was scrutinised with school leaders and staff.
- Inspectors undertook an extensive scrutiny of pupils' books to evaluate the quality of work and check the accuracy of assessment information, including those of disadvantaged pupils. They also spoke with pupils to check their understanding of what was seen in workbooks.
- Inspectors spoke to children during various activities during the inspection and heard a sample of pupils from each year group read.
- Inspectors observed breaktimes and met with pupils during meetings and through walks around and agreed 'tours' of the school.
- The 52 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were taken into account. The lead inspector considered comments provided alternatively, including inspectors' discussions with parents. Furthermore, the inspection took account of the 47 responses of parents to the free-text facility, as well as the 44 responses to the pupil survey and 14 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jenny Boyd	Ofsted Inspector
Debbie Marklove	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Wilson-Chalon	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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