

St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Hatfield Broad Oak

Hatfield Broad Oak, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire CM22 7HH

Inspection dates

25–26 April 2018

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This is a school where the pupils are happy and get along well together, while learning a wide range of subjects that are taught passionately.
- Following a decline in pupil outcomes, the work of leaders and governors has ensured that pupil outcomes have improved considerably and are now good. Pupils' progress has increased since 2016 and current pupils are making good progress. As a result, pupils' academic attainment across a range of subjects in key stages 1 and 2 is closing rapidly on that of pupils nationally.
- The school's curriculum is broad and engaging. It encourages a love of learning across a wide range of subjects. Teachers are able to show pupils' progress in different subjects in their books. Leaders do not assess and track pupil progress as carefully in some subjects as they do in English, mathematics, science and religious education (RE).
- The overwhelming majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. There are a small number of pupils who find it hard to make the correct behaviour choices. Their behaviour is managed well by staff most of the time.
- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural knowledge and understanding has a very high profile within the school's curriculum. However, leaders recognise that there is more to do to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain beyond the village.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good across key stages 1 and 2. Teaching assistants play an important role in assisting teachers with mixed-age classes. The school is now fully staffed with effective teachers.
- Leaders have worked hard to improve the progress of most pupils. Pupils with high levels of need are exceptionally well supported and cared for.
- The early years foundation stage is improving, but is not yet good enough. The current staffing is new and is being supported well, but children's outcomes have not yet caught up to where they should be.
- Parental views are mixed. Many are highly supportive. A large group of parents are concerned about leadership being shared across the federation and, as a result, leaders' ability to respond to their concerns.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the early years foundation stage by training, and continuing to support, the development of the new team.
- Ensure that leaders track pupils' progress across the wider curriculum as carefully as they do in English, mathematics, science and RE.
- Build on existing work to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain, by increasing pupils' opportunities to explore different faiths, cultures, occupations and the economic aspects of personal, health, social and economic education.
- Build on existing work to communicate with parents to increase the proportion that understand the strengths and challenges of the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher works hard to identify, spread and maximise the impact of best practice across the two federation schools. As a result of the federation and the wider cluster, staff are able to plan together. Through comparing work with that of a wider range of pupils, they have gained a better understanding of expected standards and pupil progress.
- The federation enables expertise to be shared across the schools. This is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching in general and especially in improving provision in science and in the early years.
- Leaders and governors are committed to pupils studying a wide range of subjects throughout each year, including Year 6. The curriculum is broad. All classes study a range of subjects which interest and engage pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils investigate the life of Leonardo da Vinci, learning about art and history while practising their report-writing skills. Leaders make use of available expertise, for example using the expertise of the local vicar to teach Latin. Preparation and practice for external tests takes place outside of the normal timetable to avoid narrowing the curriculum during the school day.
- Art, music and drama play an important part in pupils' cultural education. Teachers were able to demonstrate progress in art through pupils' books. Pupils in Class 3 were excited about participating in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and were busily rehearsing their play during the inspection.
- There are few pupils entitled to the pupil premium. Leaders can account for how their small amount of funding is allocated and they can describe the areas in which it has an impact. Leaders recognise that they could be sharper in analysing whether it is targeted at the most effective interventions.
- Some parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities spoke passionately about how the school had supported them in gaining additional help, for example through education, health and care plans. Teaching assistants are assigned to where they are most needed. The new SEN and/or disabilities coordinator (SENCo) is beginning to review and evaluate the effectiveness of actions to support the full range of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities.
- Staff at all levels and in all roles are proud to work at the school and the majority say it is better than at the time of the previous inspection. Very nearly all say that behaviour is good and managed well. All believe that pupils are safe. They are appreciative of leaders' consideration of their workload, and said, 'The leadership team is thoughtful and understanding of work life balance.'
- Additional funding to support sport and physical education is used well to support participation in a wide range of clubs and activities. For example, the funding, supplemented by money from the parent/teacher association enables pupils to have swimming lessons at the leisure centre in the nearest town.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth is central to all aspects of the school's activity. For example, in a lovely assembly about the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, pupils reflected on what makes them afraid or anxious. Pupils are aware of fundamental British values such as democracy. They are less exposed to role models from different cultures and backgrounds in modern Britain. Pupils do not have opportunities to think ahead to jobs to which they may aspire after secondary school.
- Leaders work hard to engage with parents. Examples include the school's parent forum and the mathematics parent/pupil evening to promote a deeper understanding of problem solving and ways that parents can support their child's progress. A number of parents expressed considerable frustration that the headteacher divides her time between two schools. Others were extremely positive about the quality of leadership and management and the overall education provided.
- The local authority has rigorously held leaders to account and monitored the school's improvement. This has been an important factor in bringing about the improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupil achievement. Given that this is a school and a local authority with very limited resources, staff have felt that the balance has been more on accountability than on support. This is a good and improving school, but with each teacher being responsible for a quarter of the provision, it is vulnerable to falls in standards and so the local authority is right to continue to check the school regularly.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective.
- The governing body brings a range of skills and experience to support and challenge leaders. Governors keep themselves well informed about the views of parents. The results of the Ofsted survey, Parent View, are in contrast to the most recent parental survey by governors, which was more positive.
- Governors have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are very supportive and visit regularly. They observe the work of the school and check on safeguarding and health and safety. They are highly enthusiastic. The local authority has helped them to be more realistic in evaluating the school.
- Governors have been instrumental in finding solutions to the challenge of maintaining effective provision in a small village school, for example through managing the federation process.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are diligent in ensuring that secure arrangements for child protection are in place. All statutory requirements are met. Most importantly, nearly all pupils say that they feel safe. Staff agree that pupils are kept safe. Some parents and a very small number of pupils in their questionnaires said that they did not feel safe. The inspector investigated these concerns. He found that there were incidents when pupils had been unsettled by

other pupils with severe behaviour issues. This behaviour is managed well by staff, but the way in which it was dealt with could not always be made obvious to pupils and parents.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has improved through a combination of training, checking and effective management of teachers' performance.
- Teachers use a wide range of resources. They make effective use of strategies developed through high-quality training. Leaders have provided coaching for less experienced teachers as well as opportunities for teachers to visit other schools and observe effective teaching. This has resulted in the wider implementation of a range of teaching strategies and increased the matching of work to pupils' abilities.
- In the school's mixed-age classes, teachers skilfully plan learning activities that are suitably accessible and challenging for pupils of different abilities and ages. The involvement of teaching assistants helps teachers to manage this.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils of different abilities. The school's approach to providing work to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities is consistent across classes and is understood by pupils. Pupils clearly enjoy their lessons and are enthusiastic participants in activities. As a result, challenge for the most able pupils is mostly provided effectively. Pupils' vocabulary is developed well through the wide range of subjects studied.
- Teachers make sure that transitions between different tasks, or when groups re-join the main class, are quick and maximise learning time. Pupils work well together, getting on with tasks. Classrooms are bright and engaging, with, for example, working walls aiding learning in core subjects.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge over a range of subjects adds confidence to their teaching. Leaders of subjects are becoming increasingly expert in their subject. This is especially true of mathematics, where standards have risen across the school due to the training provided by the highly knowledgeable mathematics lead.
- Teachers devote a lot of time and energy to supporting pupils' learning. For example, to maintain Year 6's full curriculum up to the external tests, teachers run additional preparation before school and during the Easter holidays. While this should not be necessary, teachers recognise that gaps in learning exist because of the legacy of less effective provision in the past.
- Teachers follow the school's assessment policy. Leaders regularly check pupils' progress and use this to inform regular meetings with individual teachers. Leaders agree that the extent to which teachers check what pupils know and understand, and to which they adapt their teaching in response, is developing, but is not consistent across classes.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are very polite and welcoming to visitors. They are fine ambassadors for their school. Most pupils take pride in their work, as seen in their excellent handwriting.
- Very nearly all pupils say that they are safe and feel safe in school. Pupils told the inspector that there had been some bullying in the past, but not now. They have a good awareness of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and actively try to prevent it from occurring. Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe in relation to e-safety. Many parents responding to Parent View agreed that their children are happy and safe at school.
- Pupils are taught to stay healthy. There are lots of opportunities for exercise and sports. Pupils eat vegetables with their school lunches and fruit is available at lunch and break.
- The personal development for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities and those who are vulnerable is given priority and they are cared for particularly well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- During the inspection, pupils' behaviour in class and around the school and at break and lunchtime was consistently good. This reflects the findings of the previous term's local authority review.
- Professional relationships between adults and pupils are good. Pupils are courteous and support each other with their learning. Their positive attitudes help lessons to flow well. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to keep all pupils engaged in their work.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their attendance is above average.
- There are a very small number of pupils who need more intensive support to manage their behaviour. The number has grown this year, just when the school has lost the learning mentor who was skilled and experienced at managing these pupils. For the vast majority of time, the behaviour of these pupils is managed well, but there are occasions when a pupil behaves unacceptably and, as a result, others have been frightened or hurt. It is understandable that the perception of some parents, and of a few pupils, is that behaviour is not good. However, for the vast majority of pupils, behaviour is very good.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The inspector interviewed each class teacher individually and asked them to demonstrate the progress of current pupils through the work in their books.
- Books were looked at in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, but also a number of other subjects, such as the humanities and art. It is clear from pupils' work across a wide range of subjects, teachers' accurate analysis of pupils' progress and case studies provided for some individual pupils, that overall current pupils are making good progress over time. This is leading to improved attainment with the school's current assessment, in, for example, Year 6 mathematics, being in line with that seen nationally.
- Pupils' attainment in national tests fell in 2016. There was an improvement in 2017 and the standards for current pupils have increased further. In 2017, the progress of pupils from the end of key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2 was well below average in reading and in mathematics. The number of pupils taking national tests each year is quite small and so each individual makes a large difference when making comparisons to the national average. Additionally, the well above average proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities within a small group of Year 6 pupils necessitates caution when using published performance information.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and discussed their choice of books. Pupils have a love of reading and talk enthusiastically about their fiction and non-fiction reading. The school's results in the Year 1 phonics check has hovered around the national average for the last three years. Pupils' current attainment in Year 6 reading is similar to that found nationally.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils is too small to enable any meaningful comparisons to be made.
- The progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is good overall. Pupils with an education, health and care plan have their needs very well met, leading to a range of positive outcomes not limited to academic success. Leaders recognise the need to check whether different interventions could lead to better progress. The new SENCo is working on this.
- The most able pupils are challenged appropriately by teachers through questioning that requires them to think about and explain their answers. Last year, they made better progress than their peers, especially in English and science. Currently, the most able pupils are responding well to the improved provision in mathematics.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children in the Reception class have until recently been making insufficient progress to prepare them well for Year 1 because they began school without a regular teacher. As a result, parents expressed concern about the progress of children in the early years. Provision has been improving steadily since January, but the specialist skills of early years teaching, for example the teaching of phonics, are still being developed. Teachers are supported by an experienced early years teacher from the other school in

the federation.

- The proportion of early years children reaching a good level of development has been falling for three years. In 2017, it fell to below average. The school's information on the attainment of children currently in Reception suggests that the number this year is returning to above the national average. The small numbers mean that comparisons against the national average must be treated with care, as one pupil makes a big difference to whether results are above or below the national average.
- The indoor and outdoor learning environments motivate and interest children through a carefully planned range of stimulating activities, ensuring breadth and depth across the seven areas of learning. For example, in a phonics lesson, while most of the class read sounds from the whiteboard, some children were taken to the outdoor area where they practised linking letters and sounds while playing with water. The outdoor area enhances the provision and enables children to access outdoor learning throughout the year.
- Behaviour overall is good. Children interact well with each other and adults. They are happy to talk about their learning and do so with confidence. This year, there are children with behavioural problems in Reception. Adults other than teachers are used effectively within the early years to support groups of children as well as individuals.
- Safeguarding is effective. For example, there are well-established routines for the start and end of the school day, ensuring the safe 'handover' of children with parents. School policies are followed and staff in early years are clear about what to do if they have any concerns.
- Children enjoy learning and are keen to find out about the world around them. They show curiosity and are willing to talk about their learning. The system used for checking children's progress shows a wide range of experiences across the early years curriculum.

School details

Unique reference number	115178
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10041790

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susie Dutton
Executive Headteacher	Sonia Strickland
Telephone number	01279 718 267
Website	www.stmaryshbo.org.uk
Email address	admin@stmaryshbo.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2013

Information about this school

- St Mary's is a smaller than average primary school with four classes. These are organised into an early years foundation stage/Year 1 class, a mixed Year 1/2 class, a mixed Year 3/4 class and a mixed Year 5/6 class.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities is higher than the national average, as is the proportion with an education, health and care plan.
- In 2016, the school federated with Little Hallingbury Primary School and the headteacher is now the executive headteacher of both schools and there is one governing body.
- In 2016 and 2017, the school did not meet the government floor standards.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors over two days.
- The inspector observed pupils learning in each class, all of which were seen jointly with a senior leader. In addition, several short visits were made to a further range of lessons. The inspector observed pupils at break and lunchtime and before and after lessons. He observed the teaching of reading and listened to pupils reading. He held meetings with each class teacher where pupils' books from different year groups were checked to see progress.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other leaders, a group of pupils, the teachers, the chair and members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a group of parents.
- The inspector looked at the 47 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 42 written text comments on the same questionnaire. He also considered the 18 responses to the anonymous questionnaires from staff and 41 responses from pupils.
- The inspector scrutinised information about pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance, looked at the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, read minutes of the meetings of the governing body and watched pupils working in lessons.

Inspection team

Adrian Lyons, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018