

# St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Ascupart Street, Southampton, Hampshire SO14 1LU

## Inspection dates

15–16 May 2018

<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>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The very effective principal, assisted by the talented senior leaders, has created a culture of high ambition and a strong sense of purpose.
- The effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment in the school is typically good and most pupils make rapid progress.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons across the curriculum which excite and engage pupils.
- There are times when teachers do not challenge pupils sufficiently, particularly the most able pupils. Consequently, the pace of learning slows.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils are monitored closely and supported well. They make strong progress.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. It permeates all layers of school life and pupils' experience. As a result, pupils are confident and reflect on their learning well.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, work hard and have positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' personal development and behaviour are good. Pupils are polite, friendly and respectful to each other and adults.
- Relationships are very well developed. Pupils are known individually and are nurtured, supported and kept safe.
- The excellent leadership of the early years ensures that children make outstanding progress in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Pupils benefit from a curriculum which broadens their experience. It enhances their understanding of different countries and religions, as well as of their own community.
- Middle leaders do not always evaluate how well pupils learn. Therefore, it is difficult for them to establish how well teaching is improving pupils' outcomes.
- Governors are knowledgeable, supportive and challenging. They ensure that teaching and outcomes for pupils are good and improving.

## Full report

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

- Ensure that teachers plan learning that challenges all pupils at an appropriate level, particularly the most able pupils.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that middle leaders are precise in their evaluation of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The principal and senior leaders are extremely aspirational and very well organised. Pupils and staff respond well to their high expectations. Leaders have developed strong partnerships with parents and carers and the community. Through these partnerships, leaders ensure that everyone understands the school's ambition for pupils.
- Leaders check pupils' achievement robustly. They identify individuals who fall behind and swiftly provide effective intervention and support. For example, leaders have ensured that disadvantaged pupils benefit from one-to-one help with reading. In addition, pastoral support for this group of pupils has raised their achievement and self-confidence.
- Leaders have strongly emphasised the importance of promoting pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills, as well as their personal development and well-being. However, this emphasis has not resulted in less focus on other subjects. The rich curriculum provides pupils with many artistic and musical opportunities. The curriculum is structured so that pupils gain a deep understanding of the world and current issues. Different subjects are effectively linked together, which adds to pupils' engagement in learning. Leaders ensure that a wide range of extra-curricular activities complement the good provision in all subjects.
- The special educational needs coordinator is highly skilled and knowledgeable. She makes sure that the specific needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are identified, they receive appropriate and effective support and they feel secure. Good communication and effective planning to meet pupils' needs ensure that staff are highly effective in delivering support.
- Middle leaders are enthusiastic and can identify accurately areas where improvements are still needed. They have improved their specialist knowledge and use this well to support other teaching staff. However, their evaluation of the impact of teaching on the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding lacks rigour. As a result, despite pupils' progress being strong, it could be even better.
- Senior leaders' robust monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching enable them to identify strong practice and provide well-targeted professional training and coaching. Teachers new to the profession benefit from effective mentoring and support provided by skilled and experienced senior staff. Leaders have successfully created a culture in which staff are very willing to share ideas and challenge themselves and their colleagues to improve teaching further.
- Additional funding is carefully targeted to support disadvantaged pupils and to meet their needs effectively. As a result, these pupils are making good progress, which is resulting in higher attainment in core subjects and across the wider curriculum.
- The funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is used precisely to ensure that the diverse needs of this group of pupils are met well. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make rapid progress.
- The school uses its primary physical education (PE) and sport premium funding well. It

pays for the training of staff in aspects of PE where they are less confident. This has improved their skills well. The funding has also enabled pupils to have high-quality specialist teaching in a range of sporting activities that the school could not otherwise provide.

- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a secure understanding of the major world faiths, including Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. They have visited various places of worship, including a mosque and a Hindu temple. Pupils also enjoy visits to the theatre, museums and galleries. Specific lessons that explore stereotyping and prejudice develop pupils' understanding of British values, such as tolerance, thoroughly. Pupils who spoke to inspectors demonstrated a high degree of empathy and a deep understanding of the importance of equality.
- The local authority provides effective support and guidance. Links with the Portswood Primary Academy Trust (PPAT) enable the helpful sharing of ideas between staff teams and support leaders' robust checks on the quality of teaching and learning.
- Leaders ensure that they maintain effective contact with parents. They conduct surveys to gauge parents' views and identify and address any concerns that they may have. The response level to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, was low. Parents who spoke to inspectors said that they were pleased with the education that the school provides.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governance is effective. The co-chairs of the governing body have a very positive impact on the quality of governance and on school improvement. They have facilitated links with other schools, which have enabled leaders and teachers to learn from high-calibre practitioners to develop their own skills quickly.
- Governors have a broad range of expertise and experience that they use well to challenge and support leaders. The structure of each committee ensures a sharp focus on fulfilling all statutory duties and on the school's improvement priorities.
- Governors observe the school's work for themselves. They carry out learning walks, talk with pupils and look carefully at their books. Governors use the information they gather to ask leaders searching questions, for example in relation to pupils' achievement, welfare and attendance.
- Governors monitor the impact of additional funding effectively. They are knowledgeable about how the funding is spent and whether it is working. They know why interventions are successful and keep a close check on extra support to ensure that pupils' progress is rapid.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have developed a strong culture for keeping pupils safe throughout the school. All staff have benefited from a range of safeguarding training, including how to keep pupils safe from radicalisation and exploitation.

- Leaders and governors ensure that staff are kept fully up to date with the most recent guidance and information about keeping pupils safe. They ensure that the school complies with all the requirements for safer recruitment.
- Leaders have ensured that there are clear systems in place that members of staff adhere to consistently. Child protection and safeguarding have a consistently high profile in the daily life of the school.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They are aware of issues such as safety when using electronic devices online and they know about the different types of bullying. Pupils reported that bullying hardly ever happens at their school. The school's logs of bullying and prejudicial incidents support this view.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Pupils make good progress because they are taught well. Some exceptional teaching, for example in Year 6, leads to some pupils making very strong progress. Teachers are totally committed to ensuring that pupils achieve the very best outcomes. Highly positive relationships between staff and pupils underpin learning.
- Teachers make learning interesting. They bring subjects alive, such as history and geography, through visits to local and national places of interest. Teachers encourage pupils to pursue their interests and to find information out for themselves. This results in pupils producing well-researched and informative pieces of work.
- Teachers make accurate assessments of pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. They know which pupils are reaching the standards expected for their age and which require extra help.
- Teaching assistants support pupils well. They are well trained and use questioning skilfully to extend learning and to deepen pupils' understanding. Teachers and teaching assistants support each other and work flexibly to ensure that pupils learn well.
- The teaching of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is focused well on overcoming barriers to learning and supporting pupils who are progressing too slowly. Leaders and staff have accurately identified pupils' learning needs and provide targeted support to enable them to progress more quickly.
- Phonics teaching is systematic and well matched to pupils' needs. Leaders' actions to improve pupils' reading through the consistent high-quality teaching of early reading skills have been effective. Pupils read widely and often for specific purposes and for pleasure. They have access to a broad range of interesting fiction and non-fiction texts. This ensures that pupils make good progress in reading.
- Teachers usually plan learning well. However, there are times when pupils, particularly the most able, are not challenged sufficiently. This is because some staff do not have high enough expectations about what pupils can achieve. At times, pupils have to wait too long before being given work that stretches or deepens their thinking. This means that some pupils do not progress quickly enough.

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

**Good**

## Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff and pupils work well together to sustain a harmonious atmosphere where all feel valued, supported and listened to. This helps pupils to understand how to be successful. Pupils appreciate the efforts of the staff to make the school a happy and secure place.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning, their good conduct and their polite and respectful approach to each other and staff help them to achieve well. One pupil said, 'Teachers respect the rules and us, so we respect them.' These strengths are reinforced continuously by all staff, who show high levels of care for all pupils.
- Pupils are encouraged to be confident in their learning. One parent said: 'After starting school, he talked more, became more confident and now learns something new every day.' Pupils are not afraid to make mistakes and learn from them. They support one another sensitively in a learning environment that motivates them.
- Pupils show an in-depth knowledge of how to keep themselves safe, for example when online. They know how to keep themselves safe within and beyond the school. Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take and know who they can go to in school if they need help.
- Pupils benefit from an education which effectively supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a wide range of experiences. Leaders ensure that there is a strong and successful emphasis on having respect for all and developing a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and are self-disciplined. They follow instructions immediately, are keen to answer questions and focus well on their learning. However, when there are limited opportunities for pupils to extend their thinking, their concentration is not always strong.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. During assemblies, they listen attentively, contribute to discussions and sing with enthusiasm. They think deeply about the themes being explored and respond thoughtfully to questions.
- The school's environment has been improved. For example, leaders have developed the library very well so that it is a place where pupils want to go to read. The school is welcoming and teachers make classrooms attractive places in which pupils learn well.
- Attendance levels are below the national average. A small proportion of pupils are absent too often. Leaders are using a wide range of strategies to tackle this effectively. Leaders support parents well, helping them to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time. Leaders work closely with the local authority's officers to challenge parents whose children are persistently absent.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Leaders were determined that the disappointing performance at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 would not be replicated. In 2017, the outcomes of pupils at the end of key stage 2 were better and the current Year 6 pupils are achieving much better than the previous cohorts. They have made up for previously lost ground as a result of the good teaching they receive. Consequently, these pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils across the school are making rapid progress. Visits to classrooms and a scrutiny of pupils' work show that most are making good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics because teachers ensure that they effectively build upon pupils' previous learning.
- The work in their books shows that most pupils are working at the standard expected for their age across the curriculum. This is also evident in the school's own assessment information about pupils. However, the challenge for pupils, particularly for the most able, is not always sufficient to extend their learning. This means that some pupils do not make the progress that they are capable of.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making good progress. This is because staff have a clear view of the gaps in the skills and knowledge of these pupils, and sharply identify where pupils need to make more rapid progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils make strong progress across the curriculum. As a result, gaps between the attainment of these pupils and their peers are closing. Disadvantaged pupils are attaining at similar levels to other pupils nationally.
- The most able pupils generally make good progress because staff plan work that takes into account their skills and attainment. Occasionally, these pupils are not challenged enough. When this is the case, the rate of their progress slows.
- Pupils' progress in reading has improved because of consistently effective teaching. Pupils can use phonics to sound out unfamiliar words and demonstrate their deep understanding of what they read. The school promotes reading well through activities such as the use of stimulating texts related to topics in the wider curriculum. This captures pupils' interests and motivates them to want to read.

## Early years provision

## Outstanding

- The leadership of the early years is outstanding. The leader very carefully checks the impact of learning activities on children's progress. High-quality records track children's learning and are used to celebrate their achievements. Leaders also use these records to address any weaknesses in children's learning exceptionally quickly.
- Children enter the Nursery with varying but generally low starting points. They are assessed swiftly by the highly skilled early years team. Children's additional needs are identified accurately and individually tailored interventions are put in place if required.
- Children make outstanding progress. As a result, a large majority of children reach a good level of development. This was indicated in the 2017 published achievement information. Many develop writing and number skills that are above the standard expected for their age by the end of the Reception Year. Children develop their phonics knowledge and skills extremely well and are able to apply their learning in adult- and

child-initiated activities. They use their phonics skills to make very good attempts at writing. As a result, children are prepared exceptionally well for Year 1. Children thoroughly enjoy reading. One parent commented, 'The teachers in Reception made him love stories and books.'

- Adults' questioning skills are highly effective in extending learning and deepening children's understanding. For example, a teacher challenged a group of children to add numbers together as they knocked down skittles. She increased the level of difficulty in response to their success. Children enjoy working with the early years adults, who are supportive, nurturing and enthusiastic about children's learning and achievements.
- Leaders make excellent use of the extra funding for disadvantaged children and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Funding is used very well to provide specific support for individual children to ensure that all barriers to learning are addressed. Individual plans for children are highly effective in helping them to make very rapid progress.
- Leaders and staff ensure that the early years safety and welfare requirements are met fully and remain a high priority.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have a detailed knowledge of children's skills, abilities and interests. All staff are trained well and focus on engaging children's curiosity and developing their confidence and resilience as learners. For example, 'The Stage' provides an excellent opportunity to develop children's speaking and listening skills rapidly, at the same time as developing their social skills exceptionally well.
- Children's behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. They are keen to talk to visitors about their work and themselves. Children listen attentively and are very willing to answer questions. They learn to take turns sensitively and work collaboratively in small groups and pairs. For example, they thoroughly enjoyed engaging in conversation when acting as 'passengers' and 'conductors' inside the 'bus', and when waiting for it to arrive.
- Leaders and staff have worked very effectively to engage parents in their children's learning. Parents have benefited from a wide array of workshops and guidance on how to support their children with reading and mathematics at home.



## School details

Unique reference number	116343
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	10037817

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	626
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-chairs	Jan Bradford and Peter Hutchings
Principal	Nagindra Chung
Telephone number	02380 223 930
Website	<a href="http://www.stmaryspri.org.uk">www.stmaryspri.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@stmaryspri.org.uk">info@stmaryspri.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	17–18 October 2012

## Information about this school

- St Mary's is much larger than the average-sized primary school, with three classes in each year group from Reception to Year 6.
- The school has a nursery within the early years provision.
- The school manages a breakfast club.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is broadly average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is broadly average.
- A very large majority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school works in close partnership with PPAT.
- In 2017, the school met the government's floor standard at the end of key stage 2, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

## Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, a wide range of inspection activities were undertaken. Many were carried out jointly with the principal or senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed lessons, scrutinised pupils' work in books and undertook learning walks.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils and met with staff, governors, parents and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors evaluated a range of documentation, including: safeguarding records and the single central record; leaders' monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment; minutes of governing body meetings; the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans; the local authority's reviews; attendance data; performance management information; bullying and behaviour logs; and pupils' assessment and tracking information.
- Nineteen responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered, along with 13 free-text comments from parents.

## Inspection team

Richard Blackmore, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Judith O'Hare	Ofsted Inspector
Jenny Boyd	Ofsted Inspector
Krista Dawkins	Ofsted Inspector

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