

# St Mary's CofE Foundation Primary School

Hampton Road, Stansted, Essex CM24 8FE

## Inspection dates

22–23 May 2018

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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' actions have not been precise enough to drive improvement to raise standards and improve pupils' outcomes.
- Senior leaders have not supported subject leaders effectively in their roles. Therefore, they are not making enough of a difference to improving pupils' outcomes across the curriculum.
- Although the curriculum is broad, pupils do not study subjects in sufficient depth. As a result, they do not deepen their knowledge and understanding across the wider curriculum.
- Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Teachers do not provide pupils with precise information to help them improve their writing skills. As a result, too few pupils are reaching the higher standards.
- Teaching is too inconsistent. Teachers do not always use what they know about pupils to plan work that moves their learning on quickly enough. This is particularly so for the most able and disadvantaged pupils.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are too low. As a result, pupils do not take pride in their work or present work to a high enough standard.
- Since the previous inspection, pupils' progress in reading has been too slow in key stage 2. In 2017, Year 6 pupils made significantly less progress than other pupils nationally.
- Teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematics and writing skills across the wider curriculum.
- Leaders have not used pupil premium funding sufficiently well enough to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, supported by the restructured leadership team, has the capacity and determination to drive improvements and raise standards.
- Pupils achieve well in phonics. Pupils in Year 1 consistently achieve above the national average in the phonics screening check.
- Children make good progress in the early years and are then well prepared for Year 1.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that actions for improvement are sharply focused on improving pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics
  - supporting subject leaders to develop their leadership roles so that they contribute more effectively to raising standards and improving pupils' outcomes.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - developing teachers' skills so that they consistently use assessment information well to challenge pupils at the right level
  - ensuring that pupils have regular opportunities to deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding in a range of subjects across the curriculum
  - ensuring that pupils are provided with more opportunities to apply their mathematics and writing skills across the wider curriculum
  - further developing teachers' skills to raise standards in reading across the school
  - ensuring that teachers set consistently high expectations of the standard of work pupils produce and the quality of presentation
  - ensuring that teachers use the school's feedback policy consistently well, particularly in writing, so that pupils can make the good and better progress of which they are capable
  - ensuring that teachers enable pupils to practise working systemically and methodically to help them develop reasoning and problem-solving skills.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders' plans have not been clear or focused enough to ensure that their actions are improving pupils' outcomes across the curriculum.
- Until recently, leaders have not done enough to ensure that the good standards in the quality of teaching and learning from the previous inspection have been maintained. As a result, over time, progress and attainment by the end of Year 6 have declined and pupils are not prepared well enough for secondary school.
- Senior leaders have reviewed processes for assessing pupils' work and have implemented a structured system to measure pupils' progress and check the accuracy of their learning. Evidence in pupils' books indicates that assessment is now more accurate.
- Leaders have not routinely checked teachers' performance or ensured that they are held to account for the progress pupils make. However, leaders are now tackling weaker teaching, and this is beginning to improve. Teachers told inspectors that they value the clear guidance they now receive. Those who completed Ofsted's online staff survey said that they are proud to be a member of staff at the school.
- The school's chosen 'creative curriculum' is in its early stages. Pupils have access to a variety of experiences; however, speaking with pupils and looking at their work does not show that subjects other than English and mathematics are being studied in enough depth.
- Leaders have been too slow in providing subject leaders with the skills they need to be fully effective in their roles; therefore, they do not know what to improve to raise standards.
- The pupil premium funding has not been used precisely enough to make a significant difference to the achievement of pupils who are disadvantaged. Consequently, these pupils are not making progress in line with other pupils' nationally. Governors and school leaders have agreed to external support to review the current strategies.
- The leadership of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is effective. Funding is used well to help parents, carers and families to get the appropriate support for pupils with complex needs. Good progress can be seen from pupils' different starting points. Leaders are able to present detailed information for individual pupils, demonstrating the level of support and the impact on pupils' confidence and progress.
- Leaders and governors have a clear vision of the goals they wish to achieve. The determined and visionary new headteacher has an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. In a very short time, she has set clear and high expectations to support all staff in raising standards across the school.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the recent changes in leadership at the school. One such positive comment about the new headteacher was echoed by many: 'She is enthusiastic and full of energy; the children respond so well to her. I am very much looking forward to seeing how her enthusiasm will improve the school.' Another

added: 'It is a great school, with dedicated teachers and a new head who is breathing new life into the school and bringing greater ambitions to the school.'

- Leaders use the sport premium well, utilising the school's high-quality sports facilities. Specialist teachers support teachers to develop their physical education skills while providing high-quality teaching to develop pupils' physical skills well. As a result, staff confidence has improved, and more pupils are participating in a wider range of sports.
- The school develops pupils' understanding of British values well. School council members take their roles very seriously, raising money for charity and meeting weekly to discuss future events. Pupils show an understanding of other cultures and different religions, as demonstrated in the Year 3 work on the Jewish coming of age.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have rightly refined and improved the challenge and support they provide to senior leaders. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are ambitious and committed to raising standards and recognise that the school needs to make rapid improvements.
- Governors' minutes show that there has been appropriate challenge in the past. They are supportive of the new leadership team and share the aspirational vision to rapidly improve pupils' outcomes.
- Governors carry out their statutory duties well, including their responsibility for ensuring that the school keeps pupils safe.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff training for child protection is up to date, as are all safety arrangements. Staff understand their responsibilities for keeping children safe and know what to do if they have any concerns about pupils.
- Pupils feel safe. Staff and most parents who responded to surveys, including parents who spoke with inspectors at the beginning of school, agree that pupils are kept safe and behave well. Pupils are satisfied that any concerns they have are dealt with promptly by staff.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe online in lessons and can talk about the dangers when using the internet.

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

### **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching is too inconsistent across the school. Adult's expectations for presentation of work and for what pupils can achieve are not high enough.
- Teachers do not use assessment information to plan learning that ensures all pupils are sufficiently challenged. This is notably the case for the most able pupils, who are not provided with enough challenge to make the good and better progress they should in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Many pupils who responded to Ofsted's online pupils' survey said that they did not feel

they were challenged in all lessons. Pupils who spoke with inspectors felt that when they were challenged, it was usually more in mathematics than in English.

- The teaching of reading is not yet good enough. Not enough pupils in key stage 2 are reaching the expected standard by the time they leave primary school. Pupils' attainment in key stage 1, although achieving broadly in line with national averages in 2017, declined from the previous year. The school's chosen approach to help develop pupils' reading skills is starting to show signs of improvement in pupils' understanding of the texts they read and their ability to read between the lines. This is newly implemented and, therefore, the full impact cannot yet be seen.
- Teachers have begun to develop their own skills and knowledge in mathematical reasoning and problem solving. This is beginning to have an impact on improving attainment and progress for current pupils across the school. Pupils' work shows that they are given some opportunities to work at a deeper level, but this is not regular or consistent enough across year groups.
- Teachers' overuse of worksheets, particularly in mathematics lessons, is limiting opportunities for pupils to set work out in a way that helps them practise working systematically and methodically in reasoning and problem solving.
- Pupils demonstrate that they can write interesting and well-thought-through narratives. They can write across a range of different genres. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes and audiences across the curriculum or at depth. Additionally, progress is limited because teachers do not focus systematically enough on what pupils need to learn next. As a result, many pupils do not secure some of the basics skills by the end of key stage 2, particularly in terms of structure, spelling, grammar and punctuation. This is preventing some pupils from reaching the higher standards in writing.
- Teaching of subjects other than English and mathematics varies across the school. Pupils' work shows that they have opportunities to carry out experiments in science, learn about different faiths and develop history and geography skills. Physical education (PE) is taught regularly and pupils told inspectors that they enjoy participating in competitive sport. However, pupils in key stage 2 cannot talk in depth about subjects other than English and mathematics, and neither books nor displays show that enough of each subject is covered.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported by teachers and additional adults in class. Task planners and success journals from home to school ensure that parents and pupils are fully involved with the learning. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their different starting points.
- Teachers have embraced new opportunities to 'fly' under the new leadership. There are now systems that set meaningful targets for staff development in place, a systematic approach to assessing pupils' progress and a far more rigorous process for checking pupils' work. Pupils' books and the school's assessment information indicate that the quality of teaching and learning is improving.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

## Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' well-being is at the heart of the school. Captured within the Christian ethos, 'Learning together we care, share and prepare', pupils are taught resilience and how to be good citizens. This was demonstrated in how they behaved and spoke with adults and visitors.
- In assemblies, pupils learn to be respectful. Expectations are high, and entry and exit are orderly. Pupils sing enthusiastically and listen attentively to messages given through assemblies.
- In lessons, inspectors saw many examples of pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes to learning. Lessons typically run smoothly and without disruption.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well at breaktimes and play harmoniously in the extensive grounds that offer wide-ranging opportunities to be active and, equally, to have quiet time.
- A few parents voiced concerns on Ofsted's free-text service about bullying in school. Pupils felt that bullying was not an issue at the school.
- Pupils recognise that a small number of pupils need extra support in making the right behaviour choices, but all agreed that staff sort out any issues quickly. This was supported by a large number of positive responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey and, overwhelmingly, by parents who responded to Parent View.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the school's behaviour system and could not recall any pupil getting to the top level for poor behaviour.
- Attendance has improved over time and is in line with the national average. Leaders were able to provide detailed information about the few pupils who were experiencing long-term absence. Leaders have started to analyse attendance information more precisely so that they can better support individual pupils and families.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Over time, there has been a decline in pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Current school assessment indicates that pupils' progress is improving and, as a result, attainment is likely to be better than in previous years.
- The proportion of pupils who met the expected standards in reading at the end of key stage 2 was below the national average in 2016. This did not improve by the end of 2017, when it was in the bottom 5%. In addition, the proportion of pupils who reached the higher standard in reading in key stage 2 at the end of 2017 was lower than that found nationally.
- Although there is evidence that the teaching of reading is improving in key stage 2 and current pupils are making better progress, pupils' achievement in reading is not yet

good.

- The proportion of pupils at key stage 1 who reached the required standard in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly in line with the national figure in 2017, although reading attainment has declined over time. Evidence indicates that reading attainment is improving. Pupils who inspectors heard read in Year 2 were fluent and confident readers. They were able to sound out unfamiliar words, such as 'astronomer', and able to look up words that they did not know the meaning of, such as 'omen'.
- The progress disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 made by the end of key stage 2 had not fallen in reading, writing and mathematics at the same rate as other pupils in the school in 2017. However, they did not make the rapid progress needed to catch up with others nationally at the end of key stages 1 and 2. Current disadvantaged pupils in key stages 1 and 2, however, are diminishing the difference with those pupils nationally.
- Some pupils, particularly in key stage 2, are not making as much progress as they are capable of in writing or mathematics. As a result, not enough pupils are reaching the expected standards.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are tracked closely. Pupils identified with learning needs are added to a 'watch list' and closely monitored. Pupils are supported with behaviour needs and with building their confidence. This ensures that these pupils are ready to access their learning and subsequently supported to make as much progress as they can.
- Outcomes in subjects other than English and mathematics vary across the school. There is evidence to demonstrate that pupils are taught science and a range of history and geography topics. However, in some year groups, pupils' work in these subjects is limited.
- The proportion of pupils who have reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been above the national average over the past three years.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- The early years is well led and managed. The environment is vibrant and children are confident, happy learners. Children are eager to share their learning with adults and visitors. They work on tasks with a clear sense of purpose that develops their wide range of skills in many areas of learning.
- The proportion of children who have reached a good level of development has been above the national average for a number of years. Children have consistently achieved above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, they make good progress and are ready to move into key stage 1.
- The early years leader works well to ensure that transition arrangements are effective. Home visits and good communication with pre-schools support children to make a good start to their full-time education.
- Adults are well trained in teaching phonics. Children enjoy reading and those who read to inspectors were excited about their books. They read with interest and fluency and could recognise the meaning of particular words, such as 'flickering'. Children

independently were able to differentiate between real words and 'alien' words, showing an understanding of phonics and a good knowledge of different vocabulary.

- Children can apply their phonics skills well in their writing. Children enjoy writing and teachers ensure that there are many opportunities throughout the day for children to practise their writing skills, which they often choose to do.
- Children behave well and demonstrate an enjoyment of learning. They are curious learners and work well with adults and with each other. For example, four boys worked together transferring water from a bucket to a bowl and to the mud kitchen oven. They were precise with their pouring and helped each other manage the various containers. They were fully engrossed in their activity, giving each other instructions through the process.
- Routines are understood by children and they engage well and with enthusiasm in whole-class learning. They are excited and able to share what they know. Consequently, children are happy, safe and well looked after.
- The outdoor area is very well equipped and provides all the areas for learning outside that are found inside the classrooms. Children are able to engage with a wide range of interesting activities and develop their physical skills and practise their skills further.
- Children are well looked after. This is because staff and children have positive, trusting relationships, and all statutory requirements are fully met.



## School details

Unique reference number	115269
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10046377

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	308
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Corbishley
Headteacher	Barbara Young
Telephone number	01279 812212
Website	<a href="http://www.stmarysstansted.co.uk">www.stmarysstansted.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@st-marys-stansted.essex.sch.uk">head@st-marys-stansted.essex.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	22–23 April 2015

## Information about this school

- The new headteacher took up post in April 2018.
- St Mary's is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be either eligible for the pupil premium or who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average.
- In 2017, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning across all year groups.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the headteacher, governors and school staff, including senior and middle leaders. Inspectors also spoke with the school's external improvement partner.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at pupils' written work, information on pupils' attainment and progress, curriculum planning, and records of behaviour and safety. They also scrutinised the minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding documents, including mandatory checks made on the recruitment of new staff, and the school's website.
- Discussions were held with pupils from the school council and informal conversations took place during lesson times.
- The inspection team listened to pupils from across the school read and talked to them about the books they enjoy.
- The inspectors took account of the 82 responses to the online parental questionnaire, Parent View, and the 76 free-text responses. In addition, inspectors spoke with parents informally at the start and end of the school day. The inspection team also took into consideration the 125 responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils and the 23 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.

## Inspection team

Cindy Impey, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Paul Wilson	Her Majesty's Inspector
Wayne Harris	Ofsted Inspector

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