

St Mary's CofE (Aided) Primary School

Normandy, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1JL

Inspection dates

30–31 January 2019

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Outstanding |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Outstanding |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, together with other leaders, has very quickly improved the school. His determination and resolve to provide the best learning experiences for pupils mean that they receive a good education.
- The governors work well with the headteacher. They share his vision and purpose to raise further the standards of education for all pupils. Consequently, the school is continually improving.
- Teaching is well planned and fully engages pupils in their learning. Pupils enjoy their lessons. They have very positive relationships with staff.
- Pupils study a wide range of interesting topics, covering many different subjects. The curriculum is effectively developing pupils' subject-specific skills and knowledge well.
- Pupils' outcomes are improving quickly. Leaders' work to improve standards in mathematics is effective. More pupils are achieving better outcomes in mathematics.
- Children in the early years receive a good standard of education. Strong links with parents ensure that there is a rich dialogue, between school and home, about children's learning.
- Personal, development, behaviour and welfare provision for pupils is outstanding. Highly respectful relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff, are the norm.
- Parents support the school's leadership strongly. They are very happy with how the school is led, and with the quality of education their children receive.
- Leaders' higher expectations for teaching, learning and assessment have driven up standards in pupils' writing. Leaders need to continue this work so pupils make even stronger progress.
- Pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. However, not all pupils make enough progress to help them catch up with others.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop teaching, learning and assessment across the school so that pupils' progress in writing is stronger.
- Ensure that pupils with SEND make sufficient progress to enable them to catch up to other pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, in a short period, has identified the correct priorities to improve the school. Together with other leaders and staff, he has made significant progress in addressing these. As a result, the standard of education for pupils is good and continues to improve.
- The headteacher has galvanised staff to swiftly improve provision. Staff enjoy working at the school. They are a cohesive team, committed to achieving the best for all pupils. Leaders' work to improve teaching and learning is effective. More pupils are now making better progress across a wide range of subjects than in recent years.
- Teachers value their professional development opportunities highly. The changes in leaders' responsibilities and in the staff working at the school have not stalled the school's improvement. Links with local schools, brokered by the headteacher, are supporting this development. Teachers regularly meet with staff from these schools to share knowledge, skills and experience. Consequently, teaching, learning and assessment are good and improving.
- Leaders have developed a curriculum characterised by its broad range of motivating topics. Leaders ensure that these topics cover the subject-specific knowledge and skills, of the different subjects, in depth. As a result, pupils learn and understand more. Pupils have many opportunities to explore and question, as they learn through these well-planned topics.
- Leaders ensure that pupils experience thought-provoking spiritual, moral, social and cultural opportunities. Visits to France for the older pupils help them learn more about life in a different country. Pupils are prepared well to understand the diversity and fundamental values of life in modern Britain.
- The school's Christian values are deeply embedded across the school. The headteacher and other staff model the expected behaviours and attitudes consistently. Pupils learn to be respectful, tolerant, polite and caring individuals. The supportive environment is a strength of the school.
- Leaders use additional funding appropriately. The physical education (PE) and sport premium is wisely spent. Pupils enjoy a wide range of sports and often participate in inter-school competitions. Personalised support approaches for vulnerable pupils are thoughtful and well planned. Some pupils with SEND are catching up with others. Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to other pupils who have the same starting points.
- Parents are very positive about the quality of education provided by leaders and staff. They are aware of the changes made by the headteacher and other leaders and appreciate the improvements to their children's education. One parent, expressing a view shared by others, said that the school had provided her child with 'many opportunities to love life in all its fullness'.

Governance of the school

- Governors are knowledgeable and skilled. They use their different skills appropriately to oversee and support the work that leaders are doing to improve the school. Governors know the school's strengths and those areas that need developing. They have an accurate understanding of the impact of leaders' work. Consequently, they support and challenge leaders well to ensure that the school's effectiveness continues to improve.
- Governors are suitably trained and fulfil their statutory duties well. They visit school regularly to check that the safeguarding policies and procedures remain effective. They check that the processes to recruit staff safely are followed by leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The culture for keeping pupils safe is strong. School leaders work well with other agencies, in a timely manner, to ensure that pupils and vulnerable families are supported properly. Both parents and pupils agree that pupils feel very safe at school.
- Staff are well trained and understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Leaders ensure that staff are kept up to date with any changes in safeguarding regulation. All staff know who to talk to if they have any concerns about a pupil. Staff are confident that issues are dealt with quickly, when and if needed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good across the school. Positive relationships between pupils and staff underpin the high expectations evident in each classroom and the well-established routines for learning. As a result, pupils learn well and make good progress across many subjects.
- Teachers use their strong subject knowledge well to plan exciting learning activities for pupils. Pupils are often challenged to achieve to the best of their ability. The teaching of mathematics has improved rapidly in recent times.
- Teachers' questioning skilfully probes pupils' understanding of their work. Teachers quickly adapt their questions and approach to ensure that pupils receive suitable support or challenge. Teaching checks pupils' understanding of what they have learned before moving on to different activities. This was evident in Year 1, where adults effectively probed pupils' understanding of the vocabulary needed to describe the life of a turtle and its environment.
- Teachers use assessment information well to identify accurately the gaps in pupils' learning. They use the school's feedback policy to help pupils identify how to improve their work further.
- The teaching of reading is effective. Teachers' use of well-chosen and interesting reading books provides stimulating material to promote pupils' love of reading, as well as improving their reading skills. The library is at the heart of the school. The library supports the culture of reading for pleasure and learning, and this is evident across the school.

- Teachers are well trained. They share their good practice with each other and regularly meet together to check their assessments of pupils' work. They often visit colleagues in other schools to check the accuracy of their assessments through shared moderation activities. A greater proportion of pupils are making stronger progress than in previous years, across many subjects. This is particularly so in mathematics.
- Teaching assistants are used well during lessons and for interventions outside the class to support pupils' learning. They understand the individual needs of pupils with SEND. Consequently, some pupils with SEND make rapid progress and catch up quickly. However, teachers are not yet consistently checking that pupils with SEND are making strong enough progress.
- The teaching of writing across the school has improved rapidly. Pupils' written presentation skills are strong. Writing seen in pupils' books, in Years 5 and 6, showed pupils' love of writing being developed well alongside their technical skills. Their written work, in response to 'The Big Friendly Giant' by Roald Dahl and 'My secret war diary' by Marcia Williams, demonstrated their enjoyment and understanding of what an author does. Nevertheless, more pupils need to make better progress in writing by the end of key stage 2.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils are extremely happy at school. They show the utmost respect for each other.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe at school. Their parents agree with them. Breaktimes are cheerful and vibrant. Pupils play games together well and are carefully supervised by adults. Lunchtimes are calm and orderly. Pupils are incredibly well mannered towards staff, visitors and each other.
- Pupils say that there is very little bullying and on the rare occasions it does occur, adults will resolve things quickly. They learn about respecting people who may be different to themselves. This is a very caring community.
- Pupils have a deep understanding of the school's values. Daily assemblies reflect the school's Christian ethos and are often used to praise pupils' good effort and work. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about the school's values and understand how these relate to fundamental British values. They know these ideals help them to live well in modern Britain.
- Pupils take their leadership responsibilities seriously. The head boys and girls proudly show visitors around the school on behalf of senior leaders. House captains organise regular sporting and other inter-house competitions. There is a friendly, competitive ethos pervading the school. It encourages pupils to play and work well together in teams.
- Pupils' work is displayed prominently around the school. A notable display showing the older pupils' Second World War history work, 'On the home front', exemplified the high standards of work completed by pupils. It also demonstrated the shared sense of joy and accomplishment in pupils' achievements that makes pupils so proud of their

school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils move around the school's building and site calmly and maturely. They line up promptly and quietly at the end of breaktimes, when asked, and show they are ready for the start of lessons. As a result, very little learning time is wasted.
- Pupils take an evident pride in keeping their school clean and tidy. There is no litter or graffiti. Classrooms are very well organised and well looked after by pupils.
- There have been no exclusions in recent years and the very few incidents of poor behaviour are swiftly dealt with by staff. The headteacher keeps an accurate record of any behaviour incidents. Pupils say that behaviour does not affect their learning. They told inspectors how fair the school's behaviour systems are.
- Pupils attend school regularly. Leaders work closely with pupils and their families to address any concerns about falling attendance. No pupils are disadvantaged by low attendance.
- Pupils have many opportunities to learn what it means to be a considerate citizen. They share their feelings aptly with adults in school. They learn to reflect on their learning and take the necessary steps to develop as caring and tolerant individuals.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' outcomes in mathematics are improving quickly. Work in the books of Year 6 pupils shows that they have strong mathematical knowledge and understanding. They are developing and using their mathematical skills confidently and efficiently.
- Pupils acquire a breadth of historical knowledge and a depth of understanding. They develop their scientific skills by exploring and observing during challenging investigations and express themselves creatively in their imaginative art work. Topic books show strong evidence of pupils developing their subject-specific knowledge and skills well.
- Pupils read widely and competently. Books are used to stimulate and engage pupils' learning as part of the well-planned curriculum. All pupils enjoy reading both at home and at school. Pupils' reading records show that there are well-established routines and expectations for reading at school and home. Pupils read fluently and show good understanding of the texts they read. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 talked confidently to inspectors about the acrobats and magicians they have read about.
- Pupils are well supported for the transition to the next stage of their education journey. For example, trips to local secondary schools help them learn more about their move from primary to secondary.
- In recent years, pupils at the end of key stage 2 have made inconsistent progress across some subjects. More key stage 2 pupils are now attaining better outcomes than historically.
- Leaders are accurate in their assessment of key stage 1 pupils' progress. Outcomes for

these pupils are improving.

- Some pupils with SEND make strong progress because of the individual support they receive. Leaders also measure the progress that pupils with SEND make in their personal development, very effectively. However, not all pupils with SEND are making enough progress to enable them to catch up with others.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in writing. However, better teaching is improving writing outcomes. As a result, more pupils now use grammar and punctuation with greater accuracy, write for a range of purposes with more confidence and better handwriting, and have generally improved the presentation of their work.

Early years provision

Good

- Children receive a good quality of education in the early years. They are cheerful and confident children. From the start of early years, they learn how to be independent in their learning. As a result, they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Teaching in early years is good. Children quickly learn to correctly form letters and know the sounds they represent. They learn to count and recognise numbers through exciting and stimulating activities. During the inspection, children enjoyed an outdoor game of skittles, having to correctly identify the sound of the letter stuck to a skittle, if the skittle was knocked over. While indoors, other children placed jigsaw shapes in the correct order to help them read the numbers 1 to 10.
- Children are well supported in the early years. The curriculum is thoughtfully planned and meets the needs of all children well. For example, the topic 'superheroes' uses role-play effectively to engage boys in their learning. Leaders are responsive to the needs of individuals and adapt learning when required. Inspectors saw children playing with ice and snow in the outdoor learning space, and observed staff helping children to notice and talk about the texture and temperature of both.
- The leaders of early years are very experienced and knowledgeable about the provision that works best for the children. They teach phonics and mathematics in the morning to quickly immerse children in the learning of both. Well-established routines and consistent expectations keep most children focused.
- Communication between the early years staff and parents is very effective. The use of online tools ensures that there is regular dialogue with parents about their children's progress. Leaders use effective assessment techniques to accurately identify children's next steps. As a result, most children are making strong progress towards achieving their early learning goals.
- Children are safe in early years. Staff are well trained and understand their responsibilities well. They know who to talk to if they have any concerns and say that these are quickly addressed by leaders, when required. Parents feel that their children are safe and well cared for in the early years.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 126029 |
| Local authority | West Sussex |
| Inspection number | 10084281 |

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.

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| 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 | 208 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Claire Swarbrick |
| Headteacher | Alexander Bird |
| Telephone number | 01403 265999 |
| Website | www.stmarysschoolhorsham.co.uk |
| Email address | office@stmarysschoolhorsham.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 3–4 October 2007 |

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It has a strong Christian ethos. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, in March 2018. The school was graded outstanding.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out several learning walks, most with senior leaders. One learning walk focused on the school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision and another looked at the progress made by pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors considered 106 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View. Inspectors also met with parents on the first day of the inspection. Inspectors looked at responses to the school's own staff survey.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils during lessons, and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. An inspector also met with a group of pupils.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders and other leaders, and the lead inspector met with a group of governors.
- A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority, and the lead inspector spoke to a representative of the Diocese of Chichester on the phone.
- The lead inspector considered the published information and school's documentation relating to pupils' achievement, and leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness. Other documentation was scrutinised, including records of the school's use of additional funding and the impact.
- An inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding procedures and policies.

Inspection team

Dylan Davies, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kirstine Boon

Ofsted Inspector

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