

# St Mary's C of E Primary School

School Lane, Washington, Pulborough, West Sussex RH20 4AP

## Inspection dates

13 to 14 February 2019

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Following a previous dip in outcomes, the new headteacher has inspired a cohesive team of staff and a clear vision for the school. Her passion and commitment have embedded an exceptionally caring ethos and boosted standards during a time of significant changes.
  - Leaders and governors have been well supported by the local authority and benefit from working with other local schools. This training has helped to boost standards across the school.
  - St Mary's has particular strengths in music, modern foreign languages and sports. Staff provide pupils with stimulating learning contexts and boost learning through trips and visits. As one parent proudly recalled, 'My children always come home happy and engaged about the world.'
  - The higher-than-average number of pupils who join the school other than at the beginning of Reception are supported to settle in very well.
  - Staff ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the centre of everything they do. Consequently, pupils are very well prepared for their next steps in education and life in modern, diverse Britain.
  - Attendance is consistently above the national average for primary schools.
  - St Mary's offers a warm and inclusive family atmosphere. Pupils feel safe, are polite, respectful and rightly proud of their school.
  - Children in Reception get a good start to their education. Strong relationships and enhanced learning environments have boosted the quality of teaching and learning.
  - Outcomes at the end of key stage 2 are good. Pupils make progress in line with the national averages. Pupils' mathematical skills have significantly improved following a dip last year.
  - In some areas of the curriculum teachers do not make sufficient use of pupils' progress information to inform the next steps of their learning. Where this happens, pupils with low prior attainment can struggle to keep up, or the most able are not sufficiently challenged.
  - The impact of teaching assistants in classrooms is variable across the school. Refinements to some teachers' planning are needed to make better use of teaching assistants and to ensure that all groups of pupils are actively engaged in class.
- Most parents value the work of the school and are keen to praise the support on offer. However, a small minority of parents expressed concerns about pupils' behaviour or the quality of communication from the school.

## Full report

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

- Ensure that teachers more consistently make use of teaching assistants to support pupils from all starting points to be actively engaged in learning activities.
- Improve the level of challenge, particularly for the most able pupils, so that an even greater proportion exceed age-related expectations by the end of Year 6.
- Improve the quality of learning in science and across the wider curriculum by:
  - ensuring that planning focuses on the development of subject-specific vocabulary, knowledge and skills
  - providing regular opportunities for deep thinking and the application of their writing and mathematics skills in other contexts in line with the best examples in the school.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Since her appointment two and a half years ago, the headteacher has led rapid improvements across the school. Her determination to improve the quality of teaching and other provision has been embraced by staff. Together with governors she has overseen the successful expansion of the school last year and a series of improvements to the school site. This has been recognised by parents and the local community. One parent summed up the views of many, saying, 'The headteacher has transformed this school.'
- Staff are a cohesive team and are united in their support of the headteacher. All staff who responded to the Ofsted survey think that the school is well led and managed. They believe that leaders and governors take their well-being into account, and they feel well supported by the school.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well. The school's values of service, teamwork, ambition, resilience and self-control underpin the life of the school and ensure that pupils are increasingly well prepared for life in modern Britain. Assemblies and rewards systems are used well to promote teamwork and reflection, and to celebrate success.
- Leaders have made sure that a wide range of subjects are taught throughout the school and that a rich range of learning experiences enthuses pupils. For example, aspects of provision in modern foreign languages, sports and music are very strong. However, standards in science and across the wider curriculum are not yet as consistently high as they are in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher and staff understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They apply this effectively to create pertinent plans for improvement, involving training and outside support where necessary. This ensures that appropriate actions are prioritised and then evaluated effectively.
- The local authority and diocese have been very effective in supporting school improvement over recent years. They worked with the headteacher to address areas of underperformance and begin raising standards. Over the past two years, they have successfully helped the headteacher to recruit new staff, improve teaching in English and mathematics across the school and enrich provision in early years.
- Leaders have improved the way that they monitor pupils' progress. They use regular assessment information to ensure that appropriate extra support and interventions are directed to the right place. As a result, pupils' outcomes in English and mathematics have improved.
- Strong leadership ensures that good use is made of the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. The inclusion managers' deep analysis of progress information enables a suitable range of interventions to improve the progress that these pupils make across the school. Leaders are aware that the use of teaching assistants is not yet consistent across the school and that more needs to be done to maximise the progress that pupils make in class.
- Most parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of education

provided. They believe that their children are happy and safe, and that they make good progress. Leaders and governors are aware that a small proportion of parents have concerns about either behaviour or communication from the school and there are plans in place to address this.

## **Governance of the school**

- The governors are a committed team who are knowledgeable about the school. Together, governors possess a wealth of relevant skills honed from their experience in educational, financial and business careers. This enables them to offer useful support and some challenge to leaders.
- Governors have a very clear vision for the strategic development of the school within the local community. They are rightly proud of the school's inclusive nature, its role in the local community and much improved indoor and outdoor learning environments. Members of the governing body visit the school regularly to support reviews of the school's priorities and check these against the improvement plan.
- Governors are aware that they do not offer enough challenge to leaders about the progress made by different groups of pupils, including the most able across the curriculum. Plans are in place to achieve this.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Very well-organised systems and an effective team approach involving leaders, teachers and office staff ensure that all pupils are kept safe.
- There is a robust system in place to check adults' suitability to work with children and to check staff qualifications. Regular, high-quality training for all staff is provided by the school on safeguarding matters, and staff know how to react if they have any concerns about a child's welfare.
- Clear and comprehensive record-keeping supports work with external agencies, where appropriate, to help any vulnerable pupils and their families.
- Leaders carry out detailed risk assessments and checks on all aspects of health and safety and site security. Staff are appropriately qualified in first aid.
- The school's curriculum includes suitable opportunities for pupils to learn about different aspects of safety, including when online.

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

**Good**

- Leaders have effectively addressed a dip in the quality of teaching that occurred after the last inspection. Across the school, most teaching motivates and stimulates pupils' interest. Regular training and working in partnership with other local schools has supported improvements in teachers' subject knowledge and planning in English and mathematics.
- Improved teaching in English and mathematics enables most pupils to make strong progress in these subjects. However, assessment and teaching assistants are not

always used effectively enough to ensure that activities are suitably matched to pupils' starting points. Consequently, sometimes tasks are either too hard for some pupils with SEND or too easy for some of the most able pupils in the class. When this happens, some pupils can become distracted and the pace of learning slows.

- Most teachers use questioning well to stimulate interest and promote deeper thinking in English and mathematics. Staff regularly work together, and with colleagues from a local network of other schools, to check work in pupils' books to ensure that assessments are valid and reliable in these subject areas.
- Strong leadership and effective monitoring allows staff to have an accurate analysis of the impact of interventions to support disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. However, there is some variability in how effectively teaching assistants are deployed in playing an active role in lessons to support these pupils. Teachers are not always consistent in making effective use of progress information to set high enough expectations.
- Curriculum planning for science, the arts and humanities is not yet as refined as it is in English and mathematics. Consequently, teachers' planning does not sequence the vocabulary, knowledge and skills that pupils need to acquire in these subjects sufficiently well. As a result, while there are a range of rich learning opportunities, pupils' achievement in science and in the wider curriculum is inconsistent across the school.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure at St Mary's, and they are. They can confidently recall how to keep themselves safe, including when accessing the internet.
- Pupils show high levels of respect for one another and for adults in the school, and there is a strong sense of community in the school.
- Pupils are aware of the need for rules and consequences. Pupils say that there is very little bullying of any kind, and that they are confident that adults will always listen and intervene to put a stop to any unkind behaviour.
- Pupils speak with confidence about different faiths and cultures. They have a keen sense of equalities, and they demonstrate an awareness and understanding of British values. At St Mary's pupils develop self-confidence, a sense of community and are well prepared for life in diverse modern Britain.
- The sports premium funding is used well so that pupils have increased access to a range of sporting clubs, activities and events as well as to swimming and fitness equipment in the playground. This is particularly valued by both parents and pupils and supports pupils well in learning how to keep themselves fit and healthy.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They conduct themselves very well around school, respond well to instructions and are friendly, polite and courteous.
- There is a very strong sense of community at St Mary's Primary School. In the playground, pupils play with joy and enthusiasm and invite others to play in their games. Pupils take great pride in taking responsibility for contributing to the school community through their roles as school councillors, play leaders, playground buddies, house captains and librarians.
- Pupils are very clear on what is expected of them and on the associated rewards for achievement and the sanctions for any inappropriate behaviour. Disruptions to lessons are rare and when they do occur staff are quick to resolve any issues. The consequences of any poor behaviour are well known and fairly applied.
- Pupils love coming to school and are rarely absent. As a result, overall attendance, and that of groups, is consistently above average for primary schools. As one father proudly explained, 'It's a pleasure to come here. Our children aren't just happy here, they look forward to coming here.'

## Outcomes for pupils

### Good

- Last year was the first year of published results for key stage 2 following the expansion of the school. The small number of pupils in each year group means that each pupil's performance has a marked impact on the school's overall figures.
- Published performance information shows that, in 2018, while pupils made progress in line with national figures in reading and writing, they made slower progress in mathematics. In addition, in 2018 pupils with SEND did not make the same levels of progress from their starting points as their peers. This is no longer the case. Across the school, the rate of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has improved and is now good.
- The proportion of pupils achieving and exceeding expected levels at the end of key stage 1 is in line with the national averages. Pupils make good progress from key stage 1 through key stage 2 and attain in line with the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. However, too few pupils achieve the higher standard in mathematics.
- Pupils' writing in English shows that they are confident writers who can apply the use of creative vocabulary and write appropriately for an audience. Spelling is usually accurate and, where it is not, pupils apply their phonics skills. Pupils are supported to develop a good understanding of grammatical conventions and apply these appropriately for the genre that they are writing.
- A school-wide focus on mathematics this year has boosted teaching so that the majority of pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 are achieving well in mathematics. They can apply their understanding of number to a range of problems and explain their reasoning both verbally and in writing. Leaders are aware that in key stage 2 some refinements to planning are needed to ensure that pupils from all starting points are

fully challenged in mathematics.

- The teaching of phonics in the early years and Year 1 is good. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 over the last two years has been in line with, or above, the national average. Pupils of all ages clearly enjoy reading. Older pupils read with confidence, sharing their opinions about the text and expressing preferences for authors or genres.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- Most children who join Reception do so with knowledge and skills typical for their age. On entry, the early years leader promptly assesses children's skills across a range of areas. Staff use this information well to plan activities suitably matched to children's needs. Consequently, children make good progress. By the time they leave the Reception, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is in line with national figures, and they are well prepared for key stage 1.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of early years provision. Training for staff and recent improvements to the outdoor learning areas have been used to good effect to improve provision. Children happily play with the equipment to learn to do things independently and cooperatively. Staff are on hand if a more directed approach is necessary when children are playing.
- Adults appropriately use simple instructions, targeted praise and demonstrations to encourage children to enjoy learning and develop resilience. Well-established routines support the recording of children's achievements, the assessment of their progression and the planning of their next steps in learning.
- Children's behaviour is good, both in the classroom and in the outside area. Children listen attentively to adults and to each other. Children collaborate well with their peers and make choices about the activities that they want to do.
- Effective measures are in place to make sure that children are safe in the early years and that their personal development and welfare needs are met.
- Parents particularly value the nurturing ethos of St Mary's. They appreciate the information that they regularly receive about their child's progress and are very complimentary about the staff.
- Leaders are aware that communication with local Nursery providers is limited. They are proactively seeking to address this to improve transition arrangements.



## School details

Unique reference number	125999
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10084276

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	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	98
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Craig
Headteacher	Keeley Houston
Telephone number	01903 892 401
Website	<a href="http://www.stmaryswashington.co.uk">www.stmaryswashington.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@stmaryswashington.co.uk">office@stmaryswashington.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	April 2010

## Information about this school

- St Mary's Primary School is a small primary school with pupils organised into a Reception class and three mixed-age classes. The school is designated as a Church of England school. Its last section 48 inspection took place in November 2015.
- The school expanded in September 2017 to become a primary school and teach children up to the age of 11. Outcomes for key stage 2 were published for the first time in 2018.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- A higher-than-average number of pupils join the school at times other than in Reception or Year 1.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEND is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is well below average. Detailed comment about the progress of this group is not made in this report as it may



identify individual children.

- Following the appointment of the headteacher in September 2016, there have been some staffing changes at the school. In addition, the governing body has been restructured and has reorganised its committee structure.
- The school has received support from the local authority and the Chichester Diocese.

## Information about this inspection

- Her Majesty's Inspector visited all classrooms at least twice and an assembly in order to gather evidence to contribute to the evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment. Most of these observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector talked to pupils about their learning and looked at the work in their books across a range of subjects. He spoke to pupils on the playground, during lessons, and met with a group of pupils to gather their views.
- The inspector talked to pupils about reading and heard some of the pupils read.
- A wide range of school documentation was scrutinised, including that relating to policies, strategic planning, safety, self-evaluation, pupils' achievement and behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector reviewed the record of leaders' vetting and checks on the suitability of adults to work with pupils.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, subject leaders, four members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. A phone call was made to a representative of the diocese.
- Conversations were held with a number of parents at the beginning of both days of the inspection. The inspector also considered the views expressed in 56 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and a letter received from a parent. He also analysed 13 responses to the staff questionnaire provided by Ofsted.

## Inspection team

Matthew Newberry, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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