

# Inspection of a good school: St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Fuller Street, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN16 0JH

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Inspection dates:

24–25 September 2019

## Outcome

St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and well cared for at this school. Staff aim to give pupils the best possible opportunities that help them to thrive. The school's welfare team understand pupils' needs. They are readily available to talk through concerns that parents, carers or pupils have. Staff ensure that pupils know about the dangers they may face and how to keep themselves safe.

Staff have high ambitions for all pupils. Pupils typically achieve well. The curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. Teachers aim to develop pupils' vocabulary and language to help them learn in all subjects. Teachers bring learning to life. 'Wow' days hook pupils into their learning. Outdoor learning activities help to develop pupils' social and communication skills.

Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is good. The school's values of hope, justice, friendship, aspiration and forgiveness help pupils to understand what it means to be a good and moral person. Pupil ambassadors exemplify these values. Staff make effective use of the awards system to reward good behaviour. If pupils do not behave well, staff help them to understand why their behaviour is not acceptable. Staff deal with the rare incidents of bullying effectively.

## What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have designed a curriculum that springs from the school's values. Staff have high expectations of what pupils should achieve. The development of pupils' knowledge is well sequenced. In most subjects, teachers revisit learning to help knowledge stick in pupils' memories. This helps pupils to build on what they have learned before. Pupils who begin to fall behind receive support to help them catch up. Teachers make links between subjects to help pupils develop their understanding. For example, pupils learn about the

First World War and the geography of Europe at the same time.

In a few subjects, the steps to develop pupils' knowledge are not as well planned as in others. Sometimes, activities do not match what teachers want pupils to learn. It is not always clear how the activities that teachers plan will develop pupils' understanding. Pupils in the same year group but in different classes are not always taught the same thing.

Leaders believe that reading is the key to helping pupils learn. The phonics programme is well sequenced to develop pupils' reading. Daily reading is a must in all classes. Pupils say that they enjoy reading and being read to. They talk about their favourite books with enthusiasm.

Staff support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Teachers adapt learning to make sure that all pupils can join in and succeed. Leaders keep a close eye on how well pupils with SEND are doing.

Pupils are polite and well behaved. Learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. The welfare team manages the rare incidents of poor behaviour and bullying well.

In the early years, children are well looked after. Staff are caring and make sure that children feel safe and happy. Because many children who join the school speak English as an additional language, staff use picture prompts to help children to develop their communication skills. Staff have high ambitions for children. Teachers check what children already know as soon as they start in the Reception Year. Children begin to learn new sounds and numbers quickly. Staff provide extra support for those children who need more time to remember new learning.

There is a wealth of extra-curricular clubs. Trips provide pupils with wider experiences beyond what is taught during the school day. For example, some pupils went to see a charity football match. Others attended a classical music event. Staff encourage pupils to see themselves as future leaders and take on roles and responsibilities, such as digital ambassadors. Older pupils support younger pupils.

Leaders are mindful of staff workload. They have adapted marking and assessment procedures to be less of a burden on staff. Staff say that they feel well supported by leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school's effective welfare team support pupils and families well. They have a clear oversight of pupils' behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. This gives them a well-rounded view of how to keep pupils safe.

The welfare team seek advice and support for families from external agencies. They go the extra mile to make sure that pupils are safe and that families get the support they

need.

The welfare team are thorough in their record-keeping. The team follow up actions to check that pupils are safe. Checks on staff, governors and other visitors to the school are completed correctly.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In some subjects, it is not always clear how subject disciplinary knowledge is broken down and developed to achieve the school's intended aims. Leaders need to consider how disciplinary knowledge is woven through the curriculum to achieve the school's aims at each stage of pupils' learning.
- Occasionally the work teachers give to pupils is not well matched to the intended learning. Teachers need to ensure that the activity matches what they want pupils to know and remember.
- The curriculum in mixed-aged and single-year-group classes is variable. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is organised to ensure that the sequencing of knowledge in mixed-aged and single-age classes is the same.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School to be good on 18 May 2011.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139460
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110147
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	255
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Father James Mowbray
<b>Principal</b>	Diane Wright
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stmarysprimarykettering.co.uk/">www.stmarysprimarykettering.co.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 March 2016

## Information about this school

- There have been no significant changes since the last inspection.
- St Mary's is a Church of England voluntary aided primary school within the Diocese of Peterborough. The school is a single-academy trust.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector focused closely on three subjects: reading, history and mathematics. This included lesson visits accompanied by members of the school's staff. The inspector also talked with pupils about their school and looked at pupils' workbooks in these subjects.
- Meetings were held with the principal, deputy principal, leader for pupils with SEND, subject leaders for reading, history and mathematics, teachers and teaching assistants. The inspector also spoke with the chair of trustees and three governors.
- The inspector spoke with parents informally and considered the 25 responses to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View, and the 28 responses to the staff survey.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including the school's curriculum plans, plans for improvement, the most recent published information on the achievement and progress of pupils and information relating to the safeguarding of pupils. The inspector

considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

### **Inspection team**

Helen Williams, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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