

# St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Burton Latimer

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122015
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	353808
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30 June –1 July 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Anthony O'Malley HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	194
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Christopher Pykett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tony Collins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 June 2008
<b>School address</b>	High Street Burton Latimer Kettering
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<b>Fax number</b>	01536 724241
<b>Email address</b>	head@stmary-ce.northants-ecl.gov.uk

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## **Introduction**

This inspection was carried out at short notice by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors observed 12 lessons and six teachers were seen teaching. They held meetings with senior staff, pupils, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors looked at school documents including data about pupils' attainment and progress. They also scrutinised work in pupils' books.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the success of the school in raising pupils' achievement
- how effectively teaching and the curriculum meet the needs of different groups of pupils and promote active and independent learning
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in bringing about improvement.

## **Information about the school**

The school is smaller than average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is close to the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average.

When the school was inspected in June 2008, it was judged to require special measures because it failed to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. Only one teacher present at the time of that inspection remains on the staff.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. It now provides a satisfactory education.

Since the inspection in June 2008, senior leaders have required considerable support from the local authority and monitoring by Her Majesty's Inspector to move the school forward at an acceptable rate. Helped by this support there have been improvements made in nearly all aspects of the school's work that have transformed its overall effectiveness. For example, leadership and management, teaching and learning, and pupils' achievements are all now satisfactory. The school has lifted several key aspects to good, including the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the curriculum and pupils' behaviour. Central to the school's improvement has been the raising of expectations about how much progress pupils should make both in a lesson and over time. To meet these higher expectations, school leaders have challenged inadequate teaching. The headteacher and his senior leadership team now monitor closely the effectiveness of provision through lesson observations, work scrutiny and regular assessments of pupils' progress. The accurate evaluation of performance gives staff and the governing body a sharp awareness of the school's emerging strengths and areas for improvement. Together with the improved leadership and management skills of the school's leaders, they ensure that the school has sound capacity to sustain its forward momentum without continued enhanced external support.

Attainment at the end of Year 6 is average. Improvements in teaching have led to an increasing proportion of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, making at least the expected progress. Most pupils are working at or above the standards expected for their ages. However, boys' attainment in writing remains a weakness and the proportions of pupils achieving the highest levels at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are below average.

Where good and outstanding progress occur, lessons are characterised by a sharp awareness of the best strategies to ensure all groups, including higher-ability pupils and boys' working at writing tasks, fulfil their potential. During the inspection, there were plenty of examples of interesting and challenging work, pupils writing for a purpose, adults using probing questions to make pupils think and opportunities for pupils to show initiative and work collaboratively. At present, these aspects are less evident in Key Stage 1.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They have positive attitudes to learning and behave well. The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory. However, the most vulnerable,

particularly those with personal, social or emotional difficulties, receive good support so that they engage with learning and mix successfully with other pupils.

The curriculum is a strength of the school because the exciting links made through the 'Connector Curriculum' really do fire the pupils' imaginations. They are keen to share all that they have learnt through topics such as 'Around the World in Eighty Days' and 'The Dragon's Den'. Effective personal, social and health education give pupils a good understanding of matters such as personal safety and healthy lifestyles.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The senior leadership team and subject leaders have acted well on advice and training from local authority consultants to improve the quality of provision. Collaborative working practices have ensured good leadership for most subjects. The governing body is active in holding the senior leadership team to account for the standards and progress of pupils. It fulfils its statutory duties. However, evaluations of the impact of its policies and action plans in areas such as promoting community cohesion are at an early stage of development.

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

- Improve the consistency of teaching throughout the school so that at least 70% of lessons are good or outstanding by April 2011 by ensuring that:
  - the outstanding practice of the most effective teachers is shared throughout the school
  - all lessons have tasks and activities matched to the learning needs of all pupils, particularly the more able.
- Raise boys' attainment in writing by:
  - providing activities that give pupils plenty of opportunities to write to support their thinking, write for a purpose to individuals and organisations, and write for publication and display
  - ensuring the regular use of guided writing within lessons
  - using assessment information to inform teaching and move learning forward.
- Increase the proportions of pupils attaining the highest levels at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 by ensuring that pupils in all classes enjoy challenging lessons, characterised by the use of probing questions and opportunities for them to show initiative and work collaboratively.
- About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

<b>3</b>
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Inspectors observed high levels of enthusiasm and enjoyment in learning where teaching is effective. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, pupils made outstanding progress applying their knowledge of area to design a hamster cage. The

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

carefully planned tasks had the right amount of challenge for all groups and pupils showed both admirable perseverance and understandable pride in successfully completing their work. In this lesson, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities made the same progress as other pupils. School data and work recorded in books by pupils on the special educational needs register show that this is usually the case. However, in the weakest lessons observed during the inspection, work set for pupils in this group was too difficult and despite their best efforts, a small minority of pupils did not achieve as well as others. Such inconsistency in provision results in achievement being satisfactory rather than good. For example, where teachers have a clear understanding of how to promote boys' writing skills and stretch the most-able pupils, these groups make good progress. However, across the school the achievement of boys' in writing and of the most able is below average.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because the curriculum helps them to acquire insights into their own personal experiences, think through the consequences of their actions, work and play together very effectively, and develop a strong awareness and understanding of cultures around the world. The school's good links with a range of partners supports these outcomes well. Other positive outcomes include the pupils' understanding of how to stay safe and of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. However, despite the effective work of the school council, there are relatively limited opportunities for most pupils to contribute to the school and local communities.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Although still variable, the quality of teaching has improved considerably. Weaknesses remain in a small minority of lessons in the use made of assessments to plan tasks and activities that meet the needs of all pupils. Work in lessons and in books shows that most staff regularly use imaginative approaches that interest and motivate pupils. For example, a topic on Darwin involved pupils on a snail hunt. The pupils submitted data gathered to a national online survey investigating changes in the native snail population. Detailed planning supports these interesting activities and the focus is on what pupils' are learning rather than what they are doing. Classroom displays have information to support pupils and all classrooms have areas to promote imaginative responses to topics and speaking and listening skills. Skilful teaching assistants are clear about their roles. When required they provide appropriate and sensitive support for pupils with additional needs. Marking is now helping pupils know how they can improve their work and pupils, in turn, often respond in writing to the comments made by teachers. The effective use of guided writing sessions in a minority of classes is helping boys to make the same good progress in writing as girls. However, because this and other aspects of best practice are not yet shared effectively throughout the school, good teaching is not a consistent feature of provision.

The curriculum now provides well for active and independent learning - a weakness at the time of the previous inspection. Information and communication technology effectively supports learning across all subjects. For example, the school now has a link with a school in New Zealand.

Pupils are cared for satisfactorily. Strengths include the transition arrangements from local nurseries into school and the quality of support for pupils with medical or emotional needs. Attendance is average but, for a tiny minority, persistent absence is having a negative impact on their learning.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

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## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's and the senior leadership team's hard work and determination have been central in tackling the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Training and professional development have enabled senior staff to take on new initiatives confidently. There are increasingly high expectations for improved performance across all areas of the school's work and permanent members of staff are generally meeting these expectations. Unsettled staffing since the last inspection has, at times, hindered progress and the school's leaders, including the governing body, are aware of areas where better provision is essential.

The governing body fulfils its duties satisfactorily. It has an improved understanding of how well the pupils are doing in relation to national expectations. Through the core subject action groups, governors meet with staff and pupils to monitor and evaluate the impact of actions taken to improve performance. The school has sound systems to ensure that pupils are safe and statutory safeguarding requirements are in place. The school is inclusive and promotes equal opportunities satisfactorily. However, the actions implemented to improve boys' writing and the attainment of the most-able pupils are not yet meeting the needs of these groups in all classes.

A Parents' Forum is helping to improve the satisfactory relationship between the school, and parents and carers. Minutes of meetings demonstrate that the Forum does discuss important concerns and that subsequent meetings of the governing body consider points raised. The school does know its own community well and its curriculum helps develop the pupils' understanding of the wider world. However, it is aware that there is more work to do engaging with other community groups within the United Kingdom and plans are in place to achieve this.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>



**The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money**

**3**

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children enter school with skills and knowledge in line with those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Reception class and by the time they enter Year 1 their attainment is above average in key areas such as reading and writing. Children's personal, social and emotional development is particularly impressive and demonstrated by their confidence to work independently when playing imaginatively as vets, finding hidden objects using a metal detector or exploring trails through plants and trees. Children feel safe and make good contributions to lessons by eagerly answering questions and sharing their thoughts and ideas.

Adults skilfully provide a wide range of challenging activities both indoors and outdoors which help children make a good start to their time in school. Teaching is good but, occasionally, there are missed opportunities to develop the main learning focus of a session through follow-up activities. The structured teaching of letters and sounds is effective and children worked well in mixed-ability pairings sounding very clearly the beginnings and endings of challenging words. Marking and guidance to support children in the early stages of writing are excellent.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The Reception class teacher has secured good provision and positive outcomes with sound support from the senior leadership team and consultants from the local authority. The school has a satisfactory awareness of areas for improvement. It is taking the right steps to improve still further. There is a range of effective ways for parents and carers to work with the school and help support their children's learning.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

Questionnaires are not distributed for monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. Inspectors met and talked with parents and carers at the beginning and end of the school day. Most were pleased with the quality of education and care provided for their children. Several noted how changes since the previous inspection were having a positive impact. A few commented on the variable quality of

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teaching; inspectors' findings concur. Others commented that communication between the school and parents and carers was poor. However, Inspectors found that the school uses a wide range of methods to keep parents and carers informed, and is open to consultation on improving communication. A small number of parents and carers raised individual issues. Inspectors shared these matters with the headteacher.

## **Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire**

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



2 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Kettering, NN15 5RL

Thank you all very much for your friendliness and help during my five visits to your school to see how well you are learning.

St Mary's has come a long way since my first visit in January last year. It is now a satisfactory and improving school. Compared to the time of the previous inspection in June 2008, you are all making better progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science. You are learning more quickly now because your teachers and teaching assistants are better at giving you work that provides just the right amount of challenge. In most lessons, they explain things clearly and give you plenty of opportunities to work with partners and share ideas.

You learn lots of interesting things now through the 'Connector Curriculum' and this helps you enjoy school, have positive attitudes to learning and behave well. Teachers mark your work carefully. I was very pleased to see that some of you write thoughtful comments about your progress. I hope that even more of you will do this in future; it will really help your learning.

I have asked your headteacher, staff and governing body to do a number of things that will help your school become even better. I have discussed with them ways of:

- increasing the proportion of good and better teaching
- improving the performance of boys in writing
- making sure that there is enough challenge in lessons to stretch those of you who learn things quickly so that you attain the highest possible results at the end of Years 2 and 6.

You can help by continuing to try your very best in every lesson and attending school as regularly as possible.

Yours sincerely

Anthony O'Malley

Her Majesty's Inspector

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