

St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

St Mary's Road, Tetbury, GL8 8BW

Inspection dates

21–22 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides good leadership. Her determination, enthusiasm and ambition for the pupils and staff have been central to the school's rapid improvement.
- Children achieve well in the Reception classes because the teaching is good and the environment stimulating.
- Standards have risen steadily over the past two years and are above average; more pupils are now attaining the higher levels at the end of Year 6. Pupils are well prepared for secondary school.
- Most pupils make good progress because teaching is predominately good. Teachers' expectations are high and their relationships with pupils are based on mutual trust and respect. Pupils benefit from teachers' good subject knowledge and regular feedback.
- Teaching assistants and volunteers make an effective contribution by supporting pupils in the classroom and in small groups.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, so that it is good both inside and outside the classrooms. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and feel safe in school.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of subjects. There is a strong focus on developing their physical and musical skills as well as on literacy and numeracy.
- School leaders and governors have kept a tight focus on raising standards by improving the quality of teaching and learning for all pupils.
- Governors are closely involved in school life. They are knowledgeable, ask challenging questions and provide effective support.
- There is a strong sense of teamwork amongst the staff, who appreciate the good opportunities for training. Middle leaders make a good contribution to raising standards in their areas of responsibility.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a few mathematics lessons, teachers set work that is too complex for lower ability pupils.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise improving their literacy and mathematical skills in other subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited 15 lessons. Three of these were observed jointly with the headteacher. Observations were also made of the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent).
- Pupils in Year 2 read to an inspector and a group of Year 6 pupils discussed reading with an inspector.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils during lessons, lunchtimes and playtimes. Three groups of pupils discussed their views about the school with inspectors.
- Pupils' English and mathematics books were scrutinised to establish the quality of their work.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the early years leader, the mathematics and English subject leaders, the special educational needs leader, the pastoral and inclusion leader, three members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, the minutes of governing body meetings, records of lesson observations and the management of staff performance, information on pupils' progress and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Account was taken of the 86 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View. Inspectors also spoke to parents in the playground. Questionnaires were returned by 24 members of staff, whose views were also considered.

Inspection team

Joyce Cox, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Marcia Northeast	Additional Inspector
Stephen Bywater	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Early years children attend one of two full-time Reception classes.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is lower than average. The pupil premium is additional government funding which supports pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals and those in local authority care.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been significant staff changes since the last inspection. The headteacher has been in post for less than two years.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that the work set for lower ability pupils in mathematics is not too hard for them.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to practise their improving writing and mathematical skills in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Since her appointment, the headteacher has wasted no time in getting to grips with the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection. She has established a new senior team with the right skills and attitudes to lead improvement and made clear to staff her high expectations for pupils' improved progress and behaviour.
- Leaders and other staff now share the headteacher's ambition for the school, have a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, and are keen to work together as a team. There is a shared understanding that all pupils can achieve well, regardless of their background, and that only good or better teaching is acceptable. For example, when analysis revealed that pupils were not doing as well in reading as they were in mathematics and writing, pupils were given more opportunities to develop their reading skills. Current school information indicates that this has had a positive impact.
- The quality of teaching is monitored rigorously and regularly. There are effective performance management systems which are directly linked to the quality of teaching, pupils' progress and the national Teachers' Standards. Leaders and governors ensure that teachers' pay rises are dependent on pupils making good progress. Newly qualified teachers are well supported and all teachers are encouraged to reflect on their practice and share successful lessons with their colleagues.
- The headteacher acted decisively to tackle some weaknesses in teaching, which resulted in a number of staff changes in 2013. These changes were managed very well and teaching has improved and is now good.
- The extra funds available to support disadvantaged pupils have been used well. There are effective interventions to help these pupils catch up, often by skilled and well trained teaching assistants. Leaders reviewed their approach in 2014 and have now appointed a pastoral and inclusion leader to work specifically with eligible pupils and their families. School information indicates that this appointment is already having a positive impact.
- There are rigorous and regular checks on the progress of each pupil and group of pupils. A new tracking system enables staff to provide extra support quickly when necessary; so, as the headteacher said, 'No child is invisible or overlooked.' Pupil progress meetings are held every term so that teachers are much more accountable for the progress of the pupils in their classes.
- The headteacher has skilfully nurtured leadership at all levels, so that all leaders are confident about monitoring and supporting teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.
- A new curriculum, organised around books and literature, was introduced in September 2014 to meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum. This is working well, as was evident in the interesting and good quality work in Key Stage 1 on John Hegley's book *Stanley's Stick*. A new mathematics curriculum and schemes to support pupils' reading and writing have had a good impact on pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. Pupils benefit from a range of educational visits and visitors as well as themed days, residential visits and a good number of clubs, including a Young Voices choir. There is a good emphasis on respecting people and their cultures and beliefs so that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- All pupils are valued within the school community. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs benefit from well-organised support by experienced teachers and well-trained teaching assistants. The way that the school promotes equality of opportunity, fosters good relations and tackles discrimination is good.
- The local authority provides good support. Regular visits to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and detailed reports and discussions have helped improvement planning. The local authority judges that the school has made good progress since the last inspection.
- The primary sport funding is used effectively to provide new equipment and sports coaches. The impact of this funding can be seen in better physical education teaching and in the success of the school in local sporting events.
- Arrangements to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils are good. All statutory requirements are fully met and senior staff ensure that policies and procedures are rigorous and robust.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know how well the school is performing and how it compares with schools nationally. Since the previous inspection they have evolved into an effective and professional group which provides a good balance of support and challenge. Governors have a breadth of experience and regularly update their skills, for example by attending safeguarding and safer recruitment training. They know how good the teaching is and make frequent visits to the school to meet teachers, talk to pupils and look at pupils'

books. They ensure safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements. Governors oversee the way that the performance of staff is managed and reviewed, and know how underperformance is tackled. They help to ensure that there is a clear link between pay increase and teaching performance, and set the headteacher challenging targets. Governors ensure that the school's financial requirements are well managed, and they check on the impact of additional funding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In almost all lessons pupils concentrate well, showing positive attitudes and a readiness to learn. Pupils' good behaviour in lessons and around the school helps pupils to develop a sense of responsibility. Just occasionally, pupils misbehave when the teaching does not fully engage and challenge them.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, and consistently, and parents believe that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved. Pupils understand and adhere to the 'five golden rules' which are displayed in all classes.
- Provision for pupils' welfare is a strength of the school and pupils new to the school are quickly integrated. The pastoral and inclusion leader works closely and sensitively with families and outside agencies to support pupils with complex emotional and social problems. The school successfully manages the challenging behaviour of a few pupils with behavioural difficulties.
- Attendance has improved over time and is now above average, reflecting the enjoyment that pupils feel in coming to school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The headteacher and the staff are vigilant in ensuring that all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable, are well cared for and protected.
- Parents are confident that their children are happy at school and feel safe. Parents' positive views reflect those expressed by the pupils themselves, and were confirmed by inspection findings.
- Discussions with pupils revealed that they have a clear understanding of bullying and its different forms, including cyber bullying and persistent name calling. Pupils said that there was very little bullying in their school. They were equally confident that, should any bullying occur, it would be quickly sorted out by staff. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- The robust systems for checking and recording safety matters ensure that any concerns are swiftly dealt with and important points are not missed. All staff are rigorously checked prior to their appointment and staff and governors are vigilant in carrying out regular risk assessments.
- Significant improvements have been made to the security of the site since the last inspection by installing perimeter fencing and a much more secure reception area. In addition, the conscientious work of a member of staff at the start and close of the school day has improved traffic management and the safety of the pupils arriving and leaving school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils' books and rates of progress show that teaching and learning are typically good over time. Teachers have good subject knowledge and have established calm and orderly classrooms with good displays to celebrate pupils' work and to support and extend their learning.
- In most lessons, teachers set work which challenges pupils of all abilities to work hard and persevere. In a few mathematics lessons, however, the work set is too complex for lower ability pupils to understand, and they do not learn as well as they should.
- Teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to learning. They are highly skilled and effectively complement the work of the teachers. They receive good training in a range of support programmes, such as accelerating pupils' reading skills.
- First hand experiences, relevant reasons for writing and talk before writing are all improving pupils' writing. The teaching of reading, including phonics, has improved and had a positive impact on pupils' progress throughout the school. Pupils now have more opportunities to read to adults, the library has been updated and new 'boy friendly' texts have been purchased.
- Mathematics is taught well and the new scheme of work is helping pupils to develop their skills and confidence in the subject. The fact that pupils can work through the new scheme at their own level means that the most able pupils can make rapid progress and reach the higher levels at the end of Year 6.

- Pupils needing extra help, such as disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are given well-targeted support in classes so that they can catch up with their classmates.
- The scrutiny of pupils' work shows that teachers' marking has improved. In most classes, it is clear that pupils have responded to the teacher's feedback and improved their work. However, there is very little evidence of pupils using their improving writing and mathematical skills in other subjects, such as religious education and science.
- Homework is used well in all year groups to encourage pupils to practise basic skills and to prepare for future learning by researching a topic.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2014 was above the national average and current school data suggest that Key Stage 1 pupils continue to make good progress. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonic check has been above the national average for the last two years.
- Younger pupils demonstrate that they have good strategies for working out how to read words they have not previously seen and say that they enjoy the daily opportunities to read to an adult. Even the weakest readers persevere when trying to sound out unfamiliar words using their knowledge of phonics.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 has risen significantly since the last inspection; there have been year on year improvements, especially in writing and mathematics.
- The most able pupils did well in 2014. The proportions attaining the higher levels in reading and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1, and in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2, were above average.
- Pupils' additional learning needs are quickly identified by teachers and effective support is provided swiftly. Most disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same progress as their peers, as do those from the very small number of minority ethnic groups represented in the school.
- In Year 6, in 2014, the 10 disadvantaged pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium all attained Level 4. They did as well as other pupils in the school, and pupils nationally, in mathematics, and better than others in reading and writing. At the higher levels, half of these pupils made more than the expected progress and attained Level 5 in reading and a third made more than the expected progress in writing and mathematics. The overall gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school at the higher levels is closing steadily, but in 2014 this group was two terms behind in mathematics and reading.

The early years provision

is good

- Children start the Reception classes with levels of skill and knowledge that are often below those typical for their age, particularly in language and communication. All children settle quickly into class routines and make good progress. In 2014, over two thirds of children achieved a good level of development, which is above the county and national figures.
- The early years provision is well led and managed and the early years leader is constantly seeking to improve it. She ensures that assessments are regular and accurate and provide staff with the information they need to plan children's learning effectively. Children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Staff know that boys do not do quite as well as girls in some areas of learning and that this is why the provision is not yet outstanding. Teachers and teaching assistants now plan activities and tasks that engage and inspire the boys, such as the current topic on dinosaurs, and boys' attainment is improving.
- Very good links have been established between the early years staff and the pre-school providers. Home visits are made before children start school to ensure their smooth start. The school also runs a Wednesday afternoon group (Saplings) for parents and pre-school children so that they can visit the school and engage in play and learning activities. As a result, the number of children joining the Reception classes is rising every year.
- Teaching is consistently good, with an appropriate balance of outdoor and indoor activities. The outdoor learning area has been improved recently and now includes a mud kitchen, growing and digging areas and weekly welly walks around the grounds. Children have good opportunities to explore for themselves, but they also participate enthusiastically in adult-led activities.
- Staff work well with small groups of children and individuals and model good behaviour and play. The calm manner in which adults and children relate to each other fosters a positive and caring atmosphere. Consequently, children behave very well, have good attitudes and take turns and share resources sensibly.

All children make very good progress in developing their personal and social skills.

- Children are kept very safe, both indoors and outdoors, and staff ensure resources are safe, clean and well maintained. Staff are enthusiastic play partners and, during the inspection, happily shared the children's delight and amazement when they discovered that their dinosaur eggs were starting to hatch.
- Children's reading and writing develop well. The most able children are starting to write sentences using capital letters and full stops. All children make good progress learning the names and sounds of letters and many are able to spell words such as 'cat'.
- Children have numerous opportunities to practise their reading, writing and mathematics. For example, they were seen writing party invitations and conducting surveys to see how many children and adults would like a dinosaur as a pet.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	115700
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	453677

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	275
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Poppy Hughes
Headteacher	Jo Woolley
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 January 2013
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