

St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Oakfield Road, Bridgwater, TA6 7LX

Inspection dates 11–12 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils' achievement reading, writing and mathematics has improved steadily over the last three years. By the time pupils leave Key Stage 2, they reach above average standards.
- Children in the Reception classes make exceptional progress. The adults make sure that everything the children do helps them to learn. Children thrive as a result of the excellent range of activities provided.
- All adults and all pupils get on very well together. The pupils do their best because they love the interesting subjects that they learn.
- Teachers plan activities which provide good levels of challenge for pupils of all abilities.
- Pupils' progress is regularly and carefully checked. Pupils who are at risk of falling behind are spotted quickly and given extra help to catch up rapidly.
- Pupils enjoy answering questions which deepen their understanding and ensure that learning is secure.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well at all times. They are polite and respectful to each other and to adults.
- Pupils feel very safe and their parents agree that the school is a safe place in which to learn.
- Leaders, including governors, know what is going well and what needs to change. The actions they take are helping the school to get better.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not consistently make rapid and sustained progress because they do not always know exactly what they are expected to learn and what they need to do to be successful.
- Teachers who lead subjects do not play a full part in finding out about the quality of teaching and using their expertise to help others to improve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons and parts of lessons.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other leaders in school, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and with parents and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 44 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the views of parents from informal discussions in school.
- Inspectors considered school leaders' views on the quality of the school's work and their plans for school improvement, as well as information about pupils' progress. They also looked at teachers' planning, pupils' work, documentation about safeguarding procedures and examples of the targets teachers are given as part of the management of their performance.
- The inspection team analysed the 42 questionnaires completed by staff.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement for children looked after, on free school meals and the most able pupils. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of support services.

Inspection team

Jeanne Simpson, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Peta Dyke	Additional inspector
Mary Usher-Clark	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mary's Church of England Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have both been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding (those eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care) is lower than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs on the school roll is 15%. This is similar to what is found in most schools.
- The school has been awarded Healthy School status, Dyslexia Friendly School status, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, ECO Schools Green Flag Award, intermediate level of International Schools award and Active Sports Mark.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum standards set for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enable pupils to make rapid and sustained progress consistently by making sure that they know what they are learning and what they need to do to be successful.
- Enable subject leaders to play a full part in finding out about the quality of teaching in their subjects so that they can share their expertise to help everyone to improve.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers, including governors, have created a culture of high expectations. The successful outcomes of their efforts are evident in the better quality of teaching and the steadily improving standards achieved by the pupils.
- The headteacher leads by example. She models the high expectations she has of and for the pupils and her standards are reflected by all the adults in school. She has the full support of staff and parents. Almost all parents who responded on Parent View think that the school is well led and managed and would recommend the school to others.
- All leaders in school make regular checks on how well pupils are achieving. They are quick to spot if any pupils are falling behind and they immediately give them extra help so that they can catch up. As a result, there are no groups of pupils, including those eligible for additional funding, who are performing less well than their classmates.
- Teachers who lead subjects know what is going well and what needs to improve from the information they have about pupils' progress. They regularly lead training for their colleagues. However, they do not yet play a full part in checking on the quality of teaching in their subjects and sharing their expertise to help everyone to improve.
- Pupils enjoy the subjects they learn. They talk enthusiastically about the different countries and the history topics they study. All pupils enjoy the activities in the Forest School and experiences such as camping overnight on the school field develops their personal qualities effectively. The school promotes the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, though cultural aspects are less well developed than the others. Leaders are aware of this and have ensured that the new curriculum introduced this term addresses both an understanding of British culture, whilst also preparing pupils for life in modern Britain.
- The additional funding for primary sport has been used wisely and leaders have been rigorous in checking that it is making a difference to pupils' achievement and well-being. Pupils' ability in gymnastics, as well as teachers' confidence in develop pupils' skills, have improved through the partnership the school has made with a local secondary school. Additional swimming lessons have enabled pupils to develop their proficiency and the karate lessons are a very popular addition to pupils' experiences, with many pupils benefiting from the discipline and control within the sport.
- The school's systems for safeguarding of pupils meet statutory requirements. Leaders meet regularly to discuss any pupils who are causing concern. Parents are contacted appropriately and excellent support is provided.
- The local authority has an accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness overall. Good support and challenge was provided during the appointment and induction of the headteacher but levels of support have reduced appropriately as the school has improved. The local authority does not share with schools the information that it holds about its success in raising the achievement of either children at risk of not doing as well as others or the most able. This means that schools are not aware of their contribution to the local authority's effectiveness in these areas. However, the headteacher values the support provided to the designated teacher for looked after children which has helped improve achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are committed to ensuring that the school is a highly effective place in which to learn. They are not afraid to challenge the headteacher to assure themselves that the decisions that are made are the right ones for the school. Governors have a clear understanding of how well the school is doing in comparison with others because they receive very detailed reports from the headteacher and other leaders. They also check through the visits they make to school and through their understanding of information about achievement. Governors know that the quality of teaching is improving and that the targets set within the systems for managing the performance of teachers is helping this to continue. They check that effective teachers are rewarded by progression through the pay scales and that underperformance is tackled.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. From the very youngest to the very oldest, pupils are exceptionally keen and enthusiastic to learn. During the inspection, there were no occasions observed when time was lost due to low-level disruption. Pupils willingly help each other. Their concentration and commitment to

learning help them to make good and sometimes outstanding progress.

- Pupils show high levels of respect for each other, for their work and for their school. They take pride in the presentation and the quality of their work. They play well together in the large amount of space available to them outside. When it is time to return to their classrooms they do so quietly and sensibly without any reminders from adults.
- Teachers, pupils and parents all think that behaviour is a strength of the school. Pupils are pleased that those who always behave well are recognised and rewarded. They also understand that some of their classmates find it challenging to manage their behaviour, but they say that these pupils are helped to get better. Behaviour has improved over time, which shows that the school's systems are effective. There have been no exclusions for more than three years.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel exceptionally safe and their parents agree.
- When asked if there was any bullying, one pupil replied, 'We don't accept bullying in this school'. Pupils know about different kinds of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They said that there is rarely any name-calling, and if there is, it is just babyish words, not anything that adults would find offensive.
- Internet safety is given high priority. Pupils know exactly what to do to keep themselves safe when they are using the internet and parents are made aware of the risks they need to consider through regular reminders from the school. Pupils are encouraged to teach their parents about internet safety at home and at special events set up to raise awareness.
- Attendance is above average. The systems the school put in place when attendance dropped slightly were effective in restoring rates to the previously high levels. There are very few pupils who are regularly absent because they love coming to school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching has improved steadily over time. Teaching is now at least good and some is outstanding.
- Pupils know that they are taught well. When asked to describe how well they learn, one child said, 'We are encouraged to do our best but we are not made to do things we can't do. Teachers help us'. This supportive atmosphere is evident in every classroom and enables pupils to 'have a go' at new or more demanding tasks and to make increasingly rapid progress.
- Teachers ensure that no time is lost in lessons, yet they enable pupils to absorb and reflect on the challenges that their learning presents. High-quality relationships mean that pupils do their best because they want to please their teachers.
- The school makes rigorous checks on all pupils' achievement and progress, including the most able. Pupils respond well to questions which deepen their understanding.
- Pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics develop well because they regularly practise and apply these skills across all the subjects they learn.
- Teachers' marking is effective because helpful comments point the way for pupils to improve their work. Pupils know what they need to learn next because they regularly refer to their targets in English when they are working.
- Sometimes pupils do not make rapid progress. This is because teachers and teaching assistants do not check routinely that all pupils understand what they are expected to learn and what they need to do to be successful. This means that pupils cannot check for themselves how well they are doing.
- Teaching assistants are very skilled and contribute well to pupils' good progress, particularly when they are working with the less able pupils. Pupils' confidence in their own ability to work things out increases as a result of this work.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well at St Mary's. Over the last three years, attainment has risen and the standards pupils reach by the time they leave the school are above average. There is no significant difference between standards in reading, writing and mathematics, which means that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The most able pupils do well in reading writing and mathematics. A greater than average proportion of

pupils reach the higher levels in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2.

- Pupils have a good understanding of the sounds that letters make and they use their knowledge well when they meet unfamiliar words when they are reading. The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the national reading check at the end of Year 1 is above average.
- The older pupils continue to develop a love of reading. They say that this is because they are well taught when they are young. They enjoy the bronze, silver and gold challenges they earn when they read books. They can talk knowledgeably about their preferences, recognising that they may want to read certain books but some of their choices would not be, in their words, 'age appropriate'.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points during Key Stage 1. The standards they reach are rising and are now above national averages by the end of Year 2.
- Rates of progress speed up during Key Stage 2. The overwhelming majority of pupils make at least the progress expected and many do much better than this in all subjects. Progress in writing is a particular strength.
- Pupils who receive additional funding make progress which is at least as good as their classmates. The extra help they get also ensures their attainment is often better than that of other pupils in school and is about a year ahead of similar pupils nationally in all subjects.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make good progress because of the skilled support they receive. Some pupils make exceptional progress, especially in reading and writing.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children start in the Reception class from a variety of pre-school and nursery settings. Although their skills are usually slightly below those typically found for their age, they listen well and talk confidently to adults and other children. These skills help them to settle well and the excellent routines that the adults carefully introduce mean that they make an excellent start.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection could not praise highly enough the efforts made by the school to ensure that the children settle well. They say that their relationships with the teachers and other adults in school are excellent and the book which goes between the home and the school every day is very effective in sharing the little things that happen which make each child special.
- During their year in the Reception classes, children make consistently high rates of progress. By the time they enter Year 1, a much higher than average proportion are at a good level of development and the number is rising year on year.
- All adults have an excellent understanding of how young children learn. The classrooms, both inside and outside, are well organised and the activities that the adults plan for the children are stimulating and well-matched to their needs and interests. As a result, children show high levels of interest and curiosity and they are able to concentrate for sustained periods of time.
- Adults observe children carefully to assess their levels of understanding. They use their observations to ask just the right questions to extend children's learning and to help them to explain their thinking. This helps them to make rapid progress.
- Children develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They wash their hands before lunch with high levels of independence and confidence. Their behaviour, both inside and outside is excellent. They know how to keep themselves very safe without any reminders from adults.
- The leader leads by example and she ensures that the classrooms provide the highest quality support for children's learning. She makes sure that children's progress is checked meticulously so that any early difficulties are recognised and immediate help can be given. She is extremely ambitious and is justifiably proud of the high quality learning experiences enjoyed by the children.

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	123784
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	448691

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	362
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Patten
Headteacher	Mary-Jane Collington
Date of previous school inspection	29–30 June 2010
Telephone number	01278 422691
Email address	office@st-marys.somerset.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

