

St Mary's Fields Primary School

Heyworth Road, Leicester, LE3 2DA

Inspection dates 4–5 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Teaching is good across the school. Leaders at all levels, including the governors, are effective in improving the quality of teaching and are committed to continuously raising standards for all pupils.
- Governors know the school well. They work closely with leaders, offer a good balance of both challenge and support, and hold staff to account for pupils' performance.
- Pupils of all abilities and from all backgrounds make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics despite their very different starting points.
- The school is a vibrant learning community. Lessons are interesting and so pupils want to succeed in their learning.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are improving gradually as the quality of teaching rises.
- Pupils behave consistently well. They are proud of their school and say they feel safe in it.
- Teachers' marking and feedback give pupils a good understanding of how to improve their work.
- Learning activities in the Nursery and Reception are varied and enthuse the children, so they make a good start to their school life.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils are given good support and do well.
- The subjects taught engage pupils well and promote good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, teachers do not make full use of information about what pupils know and can do to ensure that all groups make rapid progress.
- The most able pupils are not always given hard enough work to enable them to reach the highest standards.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, two of which were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books during lessons and scrutinised their current work, and in previous exercise books.
- Meetings were held with staff, one group of pupils and five members of the governing body. A conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to them informally at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors took account of the 12 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the school's most recent parental survey. They had conversations with parents and carers as they dropped off their children at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered the 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- School documentation was examined, including data on pupils' current progress and records of governing body meetings, teachers' performance, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. Documentation relating to the care of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs was also reviewed.

Inspection team

Andrew Stafford, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Renee Robinson	Additional Inspector
Lynn Lowery	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mary's Fields Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school. There are two classes in each year group from Nursery to Year 4.
- The school is in the process of expanding to become a full primary school including Years 5 and 6, and building work to house the additional classes is due to be completed by August 2015.
- Children in the Early Years are taught part-time in the Nursery and full-time in the Reception classes.
- Pupils come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and nearly half speak English as an additional language, with an increasing number at an early stage of learning English in the younger age groups.
- Many more pupils than seen nationally join partway through their primary school education.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, at around 6%, is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, at 8%, is above average. A very small number of pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Approximately 30% of the pupils are supported by the pupil premium (the additional funding allocated by the government for, in this school, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals). This is above average.
- In September 2012, the governors appointed a new teacher to Key Stage 2, who also acts as the leader for literacy. In September 2013, they appointed a new teacher to Key Stage 1, who is the the joint leader for literacy. In addition, two new teachers started in September 2014.
- There is an after-school club adjacent to the school site, but it is not managed by the governing body and did not form part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement further by ensuring that:
 - the most able pupils are consistently challenged by teachers setting tasks that make them think hard in every subject
 - teachers make full use of the information gathered on pupils' attainment and progress to plan work that helps all groups of pupils to make rapid progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has developed robust monitoring and evaluation systems to improve teaching and learning, pupils' achievement and the accuracy of assessment. The headteacher and staff and governors are working enthusiastically together to raise pupils' standards. They have high expectations of themselves and pupils, as they aim for continual improvement.
- Leaders ensure that staff are held to account for the quality of their teaching and for pupils' progress. Individual targets for staff are related to the national *Teachers Standards* and pay rewards.
- All staff who have leadership responsibilities contribute well to moving the school forward. The early years leader, phase and subject leaders are accountable for analysing the progress of pupils and identifying those pupils who require additional support.
- The school has benefited from the support it receives from the local authority, especially in establishing teaching in Key Stage 2 as the age range expands.
- The curriculum is interesting and incorporates a wide variety of different activities that engage pupils well. The subjects taught contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, preparing them well for later life in modern Britain. Combined with interesting assemblies, the curriculum encourages pupils to develop good attitudes to learning, to learn about different faiths and cultures, to learn tolerance for all, and the differences between right and wrong. The school is well respected within its community. As a governor stated, 'the school has brought the community together'.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors were positive about all aspects of the school. The responses in Parent View were overwhelmingly positive, reflecting the school's most recent parental survey. The headteacher is a Local Leader of Education and has used her expertise to support newly appointed headteachers in local schools. The deputy headteacher is using her expertise alongside other early years providers to improve provision across the local development group. The assessment coordinator is a local authority moderator of standards at Key Stage 1. The governors confirm that this work has benefited leadership and helped to improve teaching and achievement at St Mary's Fields.
- The pupil premium funding is used well for support in and out of the classroom and for one-to-one support. As a result, disadvantaged pupils currently achieve as well as other pupils, often from lower starting points.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well, not just academically but with excellent pastoral and health care.
- The primary sports funding is used well. Pupils are offered a wider range of sports which has encouraged greater participation and improved their well-being. A well-trained coach leads outstanding physical education lessons, which has also developed teachers' skills.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well and makes sure that all pupils, whatever their needs, are fully involved in the life of the school. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and effective support is given quickly to any who are in danger of slipping behind in their work.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective and meet current national requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and have worked effectively with senior leaders on initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and the effect this has had on raising standards. They visit the school regularly. Governors understand the new primary curriculum and the changes to assessment procedures and are focused on making sure this has an impact on pupils' achievement. Governors hold leaders to account for pupils' progress and the standards they

reach. They make sure that teachers' pay rises are linked to pupils' progress, and that teachers have high-quality training opportunities. They use effective systems to ensure value for money. The governors ensure that the pupil premium is used appropriately, so that disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to other groups, and that the primary sports funding enhances physical education and the well-being of all pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They enjoy coming to school in this welcoming, vibrant and friendly environment and have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils take pride in their school.
- Pupils are keen to learn, listen well in class and willingly answer questions. They are respectful of adults and each other; they work well together and enjoy sharing their ideas. Pupils are proud of their work and eagerly discuss their tasks. Very occasionally, some minor disruption occurs when pupils are not fully involved and motivated in their learning.
- Around the school pupils conduct themselves well and are polite to staff and visitors. Pupils play sociably at playtimes and lunchtimes. One of the younger children held his coat out to an inspector and asked 'Please can you help me put this on?' and then responded with 'Thank you.'
- Pupils are confident to talk about their school and appreciate the opportunities to try new skills. Those who find it difficult to always get along well with others have 'buddies' and feel well supported. Pupils enjoy trips out of school and the additional after-school sports clubs.
- The school has introduced a range of measures to improve attendance. Recent figures show that attendance is improving and is now average. The number of persistent absentees is decreasing and there have been no exclusions over the last three years because behavioural strategies have a positive impact.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- All procedures for ensuring pupils' health, safety and well-being, which are at the heart of the school's work, are secure and effective. Pupils feel confident that any concerns they may raise will be dealt with quickly by an adult. Through assemblies and the curriculum they learn how to keep themselves safe in and out of school.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and there is no bullying. Parents, governors and all the staff agree. Parents' responses to inspectors showed positive support for the school's behaviour and safety strategies.
- The school's records on behaviour and case studies show that there are few concerns about behaviour and safety for any groups of pupils, and effective strategies are used to deal with any issues that may arise.
- The procedures for ensuring good behaviour and safety of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils are of a high standard. Speech and language assistants and teaching assistants have been trained to meet their academic and pastoral care needs.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is improving as a result of effective coaching by leaders. Work in pupils' books from last year and the first few weeks of this term, as well as checks carried out by leaders and evidence gathered throughout the inspection, demonstrate that the quality of teaching is improving.
- Expectations of pupils' behaviour and effort are high and there is mutual respect between pupils and their

teachers. As a result, pupils are keen to get on with their work and try to learn successfully by following their teachers' instructions. They are encouraged to try hard and are helped to learn from their mistakes.

- Most lessons engage and interest pupils. Clear explanations, well-chosen activities and skilled questioning generally ensure that pupils of all abilities build on previous learning and make good progress.
- Interesting activities encourage pupils to write regularly and at length. Good writing is modelled well and additional resources are provided to help pupils who need them. Recently, Year 4 pupils wrote lively descriptions about local history using adjectives and adverbs well. During the inspection, Year 4 pupils enthusiastically learnt to analyse metaphors and personification from *The Iron Man*.
- Pupils enjoy reading. Year 2 pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are competent enough readers to use their skills to research new information, which will support their subsequent learning.
- Teachers focus on using the correct mathematical vocabulary and ensure that any gaps are being filled and pupils are now making good progress during lessons. Key Stage 2 pupils were able to quickly understand the angles in triangles because they were given an excellent explanation of the strategies required.
- Pupils needing additional support, such as those who are disabled or have special educational needs, are given well-chosen activities by teaching assistants or other adults, so they learn and make good progress, within and outside the classroom.
- Most marking in books shows pupils what they have done well and how to improve their work. It is especially good in literacy books.
- Occasionally, pupils make slower progress when teachers have taken insufficient account of pupils' previous learning. As a result, tasks are either too easy or too hard for some pupils. For example, the most able pupils are sometimes given work which is not hard enough to fully challenge and motivate them.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the Nursery class with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age. A high proportion speak little or no English on arrival. The majority start the Reception Year with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age because of weaknesses in their literacy. In 2013 and 2014, the proportion of children who achieved the expected 'good level of development' was below the national averages. Nevertheless, this represented good progress from low starting points.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 have been broadly in line with national averages for the past three years. The impact of pupils joining the school partway through Key Stage 1 has prevented standards rising more rapidly. Currently, pupils across the key stage are making at least good progress, and the Year 2 results for reading, writing and mathematics in 2015 are predicted to rise again. Additionally, more pupils than in the past now have the skills to achieve the higher standards.
- The results of the national Year 1 check on pupils' knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) vary. The 2013 results showed a large improvement and were average. The 2014 results were below average as a result of more pupils joining Year 1 with weak reading skills. Pupils who did not reach the standard were tested four weeks later and the overall proportion rose to the national average. Phonics learning is benefiting from improved planning, so the improvement is sustainable.
- In 2014, standards at the end of Year 3 were broadly in line with expectations for pupils of this age in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good progress because the year group was swollen by new pupils who joined the school with skills and abilities below those expected. The current Year 3 pupils are already working at a higher standard, and are making at least good progress from their various starting points.

- The majority of pupils enjoy reading and current year groups are making good progress. Pupils read a variety of books and older pupils are able to make deductions and inferences from books that they choose themselves, based on their enthusiasm for particular authors.
- The pupils' writing books show that the majority make good progress across many different writing skills. However, some lack the basic skills appropriate for their age and this hinders the standards they reach.
- As the quality of teaching has improved, pupils are making good or better progress in mathematics. However, gaps in some pupils' mathematical knowledge again prevent them from reaching higher standards.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs all make at least good progress from their individual starting points. This is because they receive tailored support and teaching that helps them to learn well.
- Many pupils are from minority ethnic groups, speak English as an additional language, or join the school during the year. Extra support, such as additional phonics work and speech and language support for reading, ensures that these pupils are currently making similar progress to their classmates.
- The most able pupils usually make good progress. However, some of these pupils do not always achieve the higher standards of which they are capable, because teachers do not always provide work which fully challenges them.
- In 2014, the Key Stage 1 test results for disadvantaged pupils were below those of other pupils in the school in reading, writing and mathematics, and also in comparison with all pupils nationally. Teachers are ensuring that gaps in attainment are closing and that the current disadvantaged pupils reach similar standards to other pupils. Across the school they are making at least good progress.

The early years provision

is good

- Good leadership and management of the early years ensure children's achievement is good and they settle into 'school life' very quickly. Right from the start, supportive links are established with parents. This has a positive impact on children's learning and their personal, social and emotional development. All safeguarding policies and procedures are good and implemented consistently so children are kept safe.
- In both the Nursery and Reception classes, the children are taught well and engage in a variety of interesting activities covering all areas of learning which prepares them well for Year 1. The adults assess children's skills frequently and adapt their planning to meet the needs and interests of all children.
- Both the indoor and outside areas provide children with a vibrant learning environment. Resources are easily accessible and well chosen to stimulate interest. Activities contribute well to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, such as encouraging imagination in the role play areas. The safe and secure outside area supports all areas of learning. The children love using it to find minibeasts and search for dragons.
- Supportive relationships between adults and children help develop confidence and a positive attitude to learning. The children enjoy being together, sharing equipment and talking confidently to each other and to adults. They follow routines and their behaviour is always good and often exemplary.

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	120025
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	449605

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	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	342
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Hulatt
Headteacher	Carol Browne
Date of previous school inspection	20 April 2010
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