

Ely St Mary's CofE Junior School

High Barns, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 4RB

Inspection dates

11–12 October 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher provides focused and determined leadership. This has led to considerable improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- The school's capacity for further improvement is good. Middle leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have clear plans to bring about change and make further improvements.
- The local governing body has ensured that it has appropriately trained and experienced members. Governors provide strong support and challenge to school leaders.
- The trust provides a good balance of support and challenge. Regular checks are made on how well the school is doing to help pupils achieve the best they can.
- In reading, writing and mathematics, attainment was below national standards at the end of key stage 2 in 2016. Since then, rapid progress has been made so that in most subjects pupils typically work at a level which is similar to, or better than, the expectations for their age group.
- A broad curriculum develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils enjoy the subjects they are taught and are motivated to learn well. Many pupils participate enthusiastically in the wide range of musical activities on offer.
- Pupils like coming to school and behave well in lessons and around the school. They care for each other and are respectful.
- The school's work to support pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils receive good support to overcome any barriers to learning.
- Pupils and parents agree that the school provides a safe and secure learning environment. Safeguarding procedures are effective.
- Lessons are carefully planned and are purposeful. Pupils respond well to the good guidance they receive from their teachers and from skilled teaching assistants.
- There is high-quality provision in reading and writing. However, this is not yet the case in some aspects of the teaching of mathematics.
- Teachers plan learning activities that enable the vast majority of pupils to make good progress. However, the most able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently in English and mathematics lessons.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching of mathematics so that pupils continue to make rapid progress, and reach at least the expected standard by the end of Year 6 by ensuring that:
 - teachers always have consistently high expectations in lessons
 - teachers use their professional judgement to plan and assess work that meets the needs of all pupils.

- Ensure that the most able pupils are sufficiently challenged in all lessons, especially in English and mathematics, so that they achieve the best they can.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher is ambitious for the school and is ably supported by the deputy headteacher. Together, they have shown considerable determination in raising the expectations of staff and pupils. The roles and responsibilities of senior and middle leaders have been clearly identified so there is good capacity for further improvement.
- Leaders at all levels have a clear understanding of the improvements needed and have a shared vision for pupils to achieve the best that they possibly can. Sharply focused monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning has raised standards and accelerated pupils' progress.
- The professional development of staff has been a priority of the leadership team. The trust provides a wide range of training activities linked to the school's improvement plans and pupils' achievement. Staff have reacted positively to improve their practice and adapt to new approaches to teaching and assessment. As a result, the quality of teaching is consistently effective.
- The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum to support pupils' academic and emotional development. Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities to increase their experiences beyond their immediate environment. For example, pupils visit many places of interest, such as the cathedral and museum, and take part in annual residential visits. These opportunities enhance pupils' understanding of the topics they learn about in their lessons. Additionally, the wealth of musical experiences provided for pupils is a strength of the school.
- The school successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and British values. This is achieved through the curriculum, a planned programme of assemblies and through interactive displays. All of these help to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders use targeted additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively. They have a clear understanding of the progress that disadvantaged pupils make and they have put in place specific interventions when necessary. Leaders carefully monitor the academic progress and well-being of disadvantaged pupils and, as a result, this group of pupils make strong progress from their starting points.
- Leaders responsible for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have a clear view of the needs of individual pupils. Effective use of funding to support pupils and to address their needs means that they make good progress relative to their starting points. Support is used effectively to target pupils' academic, social and emotional needs. Leaders are quick to seek support from external agencies when necessary to ensure that pupils receive additional help.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is spent well. Specialist coaches work alongside teachers to develop their expertise in the teaching of sport and physical education (PE). Additionally, pupils benefit from access to a wide variety of after-school

sports clubs, competitive events and activities. As a result, more pupils are participating in a wider range of sports than previously.

- Parents spoken with during the inspection, and their responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, demonstrate that they value and support the school. One parent spoke for many by saying: 'This is a fantastic, friendly school and it has gone from strength to strength. The staff all do an amazing job and my child looks forward to going to school every day.'
- The school benefits well from the support of the multi-academy trust, which provides resources, specialist consultants and effective training programmes for staff. The trust enables teachers to work with colleagues from other schools within the trust, including the local secondary school. This has improved the quality of teaching, pupils' outcomes and the transition for pupils moving on to Year 7. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their education.

Governance of the school

- Governors have high aspirations for the school. Governors regularly check that they have the necessary skills and expertise to support and challenge school leaders. New appointments to the local governing body are made to fill any gaps identified in skills and knowledge. This ensures that governors have the capacity to conduct their statutory responsibilities effectively.
- There is a strong working partnership between governors and staff. This is seen especially in the effective way governors use their link roles to oversee and review specific subjects, or aspects of the school's work.
- Governors are aware of the strengths and weakness of the school. They keep a close check on the progress the school is making by regularly monitoring development plans and reviewing progress information. They hold the leadership team to account appropriately in their pursuit of rapid improvement.
- Governors review the spending of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils regularly. They are aware of the interventions and support put in place for these pupils and routinely challenge the leadership team about the progress pupils are making.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have shown vigilance in establishing a culture where pupils are kept safe. Relevant policies and procedures are up to date and are well understood. Staff know what to do should they have any concerns about pupils' safety and welfare.
- The most vulnerable pupils are given a high priority. Record-keeping is effective and the school works well with external agencies to ensure that any concerns are quickly followed up.
- There are regular safeguarding training updates for all staff and governors and those new to the school. Staff are aware of the key messages of government guidance on

keeping pupils safe in school.

- Pupils say that they feel safe at school and are confident that staff will quickly resolve any issues or concerns they may have.
- The majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their children are safe and well cared for.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good overall because there is a greater consistency of practice throughout the school, together with increasingly high expectations of pupils in most subjects. This helps most pupils to make steady gains in their learning.
- Teachers commit fully to school policies and procedures. For example, the chosen marking policy is used consistently throughout the school. Pupils report that they find the feedback they receive from teachers helpful. They also told inspectors that they appreciate the time they are given to correct their mistakes and to improve their work. One pupil commented: 'We don't just know what we've got wrong, we get a chance to improve. It's really helpful for the future.'
- Teachers have developed positive relationships with pupils based on a good knowledge of their individual strengths and interests. Classrooms are generally calm and friendly places where pupils can be seen enjoying learning. Teachers often use effective questioning to help to develop pupils' language skills. This enables pupils to think about their learning and explain their answers more successfully.
- Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to learning because they receive effective training. Consequently, pupils are well supported to make strong progress in a range of subjects, including reading and writing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive a high standard of tailored support from knowledgeable and skilled staff. Pupils' work is carefully planned. Appropriate support and specialist resources are targeted to improve their learning. As a result, these pupils are able to fully access the curriculum and achieve well in a range of subjects across the school.
- The teaching of reading is good throughout the school. Pupils are generally enthusiastic and confident readers. Pupils spoke with inspectors at length about their reading books and demonstrated a clear understanding of what they had read.
- Pupils' achievements in writing are improving over time. Evidence in pupils' books shows that the teaching of writing incorporates spelling, grammar and punctuation skills effectively. Teachers ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to produce extended pieces of writing across the curriculum to improve their writing skills.
- Teachers' planning and their assessment of pupils' work is generally effective. However, in some mathematics lessons the work set does not always match pupils' different needs and capabilities. On occasions, pupils can wait too long for the appropriate level of challenge. Work in pupils' books from the previous academic year demonstrates that pupils are not always moved on quickly enough to suitably demanding work. A few pupils who spoke to inspectors also reported this to be the case.

- In the majority of English and mathematics lessons, the most able pupils are set work that is more challenging. However, at times it is not sufficiently demanding. Teachers do not always extend the most able pupils' thinking, or move them on to the next task quickly. Consequently, the progress of the most able pupils across English and mathematics is not as rapid as it could be.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes towards their learning. During the inspection, they were polite and helpful to inspectors. One pupil told an inspector: 'We're very friendly here – and welcoming.'
- In all classes, pupils show respect and kindness to each other to make this a friendly and supportive school. They can discuss ideas with each other in pairs, or in small groups. Pupils listen well and are prepared to consider different views, cultures and faiths. They have a strong sense of the importance of tolerance and respect.
- Pupils understand and enjoy their assemblies. These occasions are planned well and make an important contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils feel safe in school and have confidence that staff will help them if they have a worry or concern. They told inspectors that: 'There are lots of adults who always listen and help straight away. We can always talk to them.' One group of pupils spoke, in particular, about the pastoral support worker and how she, 'helps us to get away from our worries and put them in the past'.
- Through a well-planned programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE), pupils develop a good understanding of how to stay safe and how to stay healthy. Pupils can talk about how to stay safe in a variety of situations, including when using the internet.
- Pupils display growing levels of maturity as they move through the school. Older pupils enjoy taking on age-appropriate leadership roles such as class captains and sports leaders, to help and care for younger pupils.
- The vast majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and those who spoke to inspectors during the inspection, agreed that pupils are well looked after and safe at Ely St Mary's CofE Junior School.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school and in lessons because of the high expectations of staff. Pupils take responsibility for their behaviour and respond positively to the school's behaviour management system.

- Playtimes and lunchtimes are well-supervised occasions that ensure pupils can play and socialise happily together.
- School records confirm that incidents of poor behaviour are few but, even so, leaders still work to reduce them even further.
- Leaders take effective action to ensure that the few pupils with low attendance are appropriately supported and challenged. The headteacher and attendance officer diligently monitor why pupils are absent and follow up concerns with parents quickly. Leaders work closely with other external agencies, such as the education welfare officer, to ensure that any attendance concerns are addressed. As a result, attendance is at least in line with national figures, including for some of the most vulnerable pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading writing and mathematics, at the end of key stage 2, is rising. Pupils are receiving a good and improving education and so most are making rapid progress from their starting points. Pupils are ready for the next stage of their education because they have secure skills and a positive attitude to learning.
- In 2016, published assessment information showed that at the end of Year 6, not enough pupils made fast enough progress or reached the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, unvalidated assessment information for 2017 indicates that pupils' achievements in reading and writing are much more positive. The information shows that most pupils made strong progress and that standards were at least in line with national averages.
- The school's own assessment information for the previous and current academic year demonstrates that the progress pupils make in all year groups and across most subjects is strong.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 is increasing. Senior leaders are making effective use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. Because of this, disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are making better progress and sometimes outperform other pupils in the school. The difference between disadvantaged pupils' achievement and the achievement of other pupils nationally is reducing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Teachers and teaching assistants know the issues that slow down pupils' learning. They ensure that the work set for these pupils will help them to overcome difficulties and to achieve well. A number of parents told inspectors that they were pleased with the way that the school has helped their children to succeed.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in mathematics has increased, although in 2017, at the end of Year 6, standards overall were just below the national average. Across all year groups, work is mostly well matched to pupils' needs and the expectations of the curriculum. As a result, most pupils make strong progress in mathematics. However, on some occasions teachers do not move pupils on quickly enough with their learning, or provide sufficient challenge for them to make greater progress.

- Generally, the most able pupils achieve well because of effective teaching and challenging learning activities which deepen their knowledge and understanding. However, this is not yet consistent in some English and mathematics lessons across the school. As a result, not all of the most able pupils achieve as well as they could.

School details

Unique reference number	141707
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10041735

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	417
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Clive Jeffries
Headteacher	Rebecca Ireland-Curtis
Telephone number	01353 662163
Website	www.elystmarys.org.uk
Email address	head@ElyStMarys.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Ely St Mary's CofE Junior School is a larger than average-sized junior school. It converted to an academy in February 2015. The school is part of the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, is in line with the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 2.

- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school, based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class and attended two assemblies. Several of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- A wide range of pupils' current workbooks, and those from the previous academic year, were looked at by inspectors throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, various middle and subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), the school office manager, the newly qualified teacher, two governors, including the chair of the governing body, and the chief operating officer of the trust.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in class, and around the school at break and lunchtimes to seek their views about the school.
- Inspectors met with several groups of pupils more formally to discuss many aspects of school life.
- Inspectors heard some pupils in Year 3 and Year 6 read. Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading habits and looked at their reading records.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents, including: assessment information; minutes from governing body meetings; the school's own evaluation; improvement plans; and records about behaviour, safeguarding children, and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 36 parent texts, and 40 responses, made by parents to the Ofsted online Parent View questionnaire. They also spoke to some parents before and after school. Additionally, inspectors took account of the 28 views expressed by members of staff and the 27 responses from pupils to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

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