

Wakefield St Marys Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Charles Street, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF1 4PE

Inspection dates

21–22 November 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	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders know the school's strengths and areas for development very well. They use assessment information effectively to identify and focus on areas that need improvement.
- The headteacher is tenacious in maintaining an ethos of high aspiration across all areas of the school. He and his skilled leadership team do whatever it takes to provide a well-rounded education for all pupils, particularly those who join the school at times other than the beginning of the academic year.
- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers ask challenging questions and use a range of exciting resources to stimulate learning. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to do their best.
- Although improving, standards in English and mathematics remain below those expected at the end of key stage 2. The most able pupils are still catching up because previous teaching was not good enough, and sometimes teachers' expectations are not high enough in mathematics.
- There is a strong culture of professional development in the school. Staff feel valued and are highly skilled because of the effective coaching that they receive from leaders.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make strong progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make particularly impressive progress.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years because of the high-quality teaching and nurturing support they receive. Pupils make rapid progress in their communication and language skills. Partnerships with parents in key stages 1 and 2 are not as strong as in the early years.
- The teaching of phonics is very effective, and outcomes in reading and in key stage 1 continue to improve. The weak spelling skills and application of punctuation are preventing some pupils in key stage 2 from achieving higher standards in their writing.
- Governors are scrupulous in ensuring that safeguarding checks are carried out to assure themselves that pupils are safe.
- The school is a very harmonious, respectful community, and pupils from different backgrounds are supported and challenged equally well. Fundamental British values are at the heart of the school and pupils are prepared exceptionally well to make a valuable contribution to society.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the attainment of pupils in order to secure consistently strong progress across all year groups, including in the early years, by:
 - addressing any further gaps in pupils' learning in key stage 2 to enable them to achieve as well as they can in reading, writing and mathematics
 - ensuring that teachers' expectations of the most able pupils are high enough
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to investigate, problem solve, reason, and apply and deepen their mathematical understanding and skills
 - strengthening work with parents in key stages 1 and 2, to enable them to be more actively involved in their children's learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher is very modest and caring. His motivation is solely to improve the life chances of children who have a diverse range of individual needs. His relentless focus on rapidly improving the quality of teaching, learning and achievement in all classes is highly regarded by all members of the school community.
- Senior leaders and governors are dedicated and passionate in their efforts to provide all groups of pupils with plentiful opportunities to become confident learners who thrive academically and socially. Leaders ensure that all staff have high aspirations for pupils, many of whom have circumstances that make them vulnerable.
- Teachers, managers and all support staff clearly understand their roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability. They lead by example and work effectively as a cohesive team. The headteacher has not shied away from difficult decisions. Targets for teachers are as ambitious as they are for pupils. As a result, teaching has improved and more pupils are reaching the standards they are capable of, particularly in key stage 1.
- New leaders and teachers in the school are well supported by senior staff. Staff value and appreciate the many opportunities that leaders provide for them to learn from more experienced colleagues. In addition, partnership work with the local authority and with a group of schools in the local area is effectively contributing to the school's improvement.
- Senior and middle leaders actively and successfully tackle the issues identified from their self-evaluation. For example, the low attainment in reading, although still below average, has been raised through a range of targeted strategies. This includes, for instance, developing a consistent approach to the teaching of reading, and introducing more stimulating texts for pupils, focusing particularly on improving reading skills for pupils in key stage 2. Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths of the school and a detailed action plan for further improvements.
- Leaders' monitoring and tracking of pupils' outcomes are accurate, rigorous and informative. Increasingly, this data is used well by teachers to plan learning according to the individual needs of pupils, and highly effective teaching is rapidly improving outcomes for pupils.
- The curriculum is designed to promote enjoyment as well as pupils' achievement. Trips and visitors to the school ensure that learning has context and develop pupils' understanding further. Pupils enjoy the specialist teaching they receive in music, computing and French. However, leaders do not monitor the quality of this teaching to ensure that it matches that seen in English and mathematics. As a consequence, the progress of some pupils across the wider curriculum is less secure.
- The deputy headteacher leads the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities effectively. She skilfully supports teachers in planning to meet individual pupils' needs. Additional funding is used well and pupils, particularly those who join the school at different times during the academic year, make good progress.
- Leaders make effective use of funding to support disadvantaged pupils. The school

provides well-tailored personal, academic and emotional support through, for example, the highly effective learning mentor. Consequently, pupils feel safe and valued and many are achieving at least as well as other pupils nationally.

- Teaching assistants are astutely deployed and receive regular, high-quality training so that they can meet pupils' diverse needs. Support for pupils who speak English as an additional language is particularly effective. Pupils show maturity in their support of their peers who have little spoken English because the school's culture positively promotes the inclusion of pupils from a wide range of backgrounds.
- As a result of extensive consultation with staff, pupils and parents, the exciting curriculum uses pupils' first-hand experiences and a range of high-quality texts to inspire learning. There are growing numbers of extra-curricular activities, which develop pupils' talents and interests very well. Pupils in Year 6 said that they find it helpful to attend the after-school sessions, which enable them to improve their reading and writing skills.
- Work is already under way to further raise the aspirations of pupils, particularly the most able and those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. This includes participation in the Wakefield girls' high schools' 'Shine' project and the Eastmoor Community project.
- The school's own core values largely mirror those of fundamental British values of respect towards and tolerance of everybody, regardless of background. The school is proud of being inclusive and values all pupils. Consequently, all pupils are treated equally and discrimination on any grounds is not tolerated. Pupils have plentiful opportunities to contribute to decision-making and they do so purposefully.
- Beautiful pieces of art are proudly displayed to represent the school's core values. These are created as part of the school's annual tradition for Year 6 pupils to leave a legacy for the school. Pupils work alongside an artist in residence, and their work includes a 'forgiveness' display using etched metal doves, a large outdoor mural representing 'responsibility' and a complex cut paper art design to illustrate 'trust'.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is supported well through curriculum areas such as religious education, music, art, French and physical education. The school successfully widens pupils' life experiences and enables them to become responsible, self-confident citizens as illustrated in their interesting core values books.

Governance of the school

- Governors are long serving, highly skilled and active in the work of the school. They know the school well and are accurate in their evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses. They are frustrated by the outcomes for pupils in 2016, which further declined in 2017, and they remain tenaciously ambitious for the school.
- Governors, along with support from the local authority and the diocese, have played an important role in maintaining stability and securing improvements in the work of the school.
- Governors constantly review their own practices in order to improve their effectiveness. Consequently, they increasingly hold the headteacher to account and identify emerging

issues effectively. Where concerns emerge, they support senior leaders in taking prompt action to address them. They increasingly ask challenging questions and ask for further information if they are not satisfied. For example, better progress for the current Year 6 pupils is a priority for governors.

- Governors check carefully that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has a positive impact on the performance of targeted children, and they challenge the school appropriately to ensure that physical education and sports funding improves the specialist skills of teachers in physical education and enables pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Senior leaders have implemented a fastidious approach to safeguarding. Leaders rigorously pursue safeguarding concerns with the local authority. They ensure that appropriate support and intervention are provided for pupils and families who need help.
- School leaders ensure that a culture of safeguarding informs the work of all staff. Staff recruitment checks are carried out diligently. Staff receive effective and regular training, coupled with additional briefings to keep safeguarding issues as the highest priority for all who work in the school.
- Members of staff are alert to any changes in pupils' behaviours and to other signs that raise concerns. They report to leaders, who respond quickly to any allegations. Leaders keep clear and robust records of their work with parents and agencies to make sure that pupils are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have strong subject knowledge across the curriculum and they model good learning behaviours. This ensures that they use imaginative themes to plan lessons which provide most pupils with the skills, knowledge and understanding that they need to make good progress. Pupils enjoy learning because work is interesting and usually well matched to their needs.
- Teachers and their assistants use questioning skilfully to deepen pupils' thinking. Teachers quickly identify when and why pupils are confused and ensure that misconceptions are addressed rapidly. The verbal interaction between teachers, their assistants and pupils is overwhelmingly positive and demonstrated very effectively in Year 5, where pupils enjoy using their 'stand up, hands up and pair up' technique to share ideas and learn from one another.
- A whole-school approach to the development of pupils' writing is enabling pupils of varying abilities to develop their writing skills in different styles and for different purposes. Pupils make effective use of well-designed resources, which strengthen their choice and use of complex vocabulary to engage the reader. Pupils are beginning to understand and apply their zero-tolerance checklists for punctuation, handwriting and

spelling to improve their own work.

- Highly skilled teaching assistants enable pupils who speak English as an additional language to quickly develop and accurately apply their vocabulary. Helpful equipment and pictorial methods are used effectively to develop pupils' understanding, and this contributes well to the rapid improvements made by pupils who join the school speaking little or no English.
- Some pupils in Years 5 and 6 have weak spelling skills, and their application of punctuation is preventing them from making more rapid progress in their writing. This reflects shortcomings in the quality of previous teaching and the number of pupils who join the school with considerable gaps in their learning.
- Phonics is taught effectively across key stage 1 and is often used to assist pupils who find reading difficult in key stage 2. Pupils who read to inspectors were confident in segmenting words and blending sounds, and they enjoy reading despite struggling at times. The school's appealing library and additional spaces across the building are in constant use by staff who effectively support pupils in reading.
- The needs of those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are met well. Work is matched carefully to pupils' individual needs, and skilled adults ensure that progress is monitored regularly and provision adapted accordingly.
- The expectations of staff are not consistently high and most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are not always challenged sufficiently. Pupils are not always given opportunities to extend their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics. This slows the rate of progress in mathematics for these pupils at times.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good
- Fundamental British values are embedded in pupils' learning about the school's core values of responsibility, forgiveness, hope, trust, respect and friendship. Pupils know and understand these values because they have helped to identify them. One pupil said 'We all understand and respect our differences.'
- The school makes every effort to meet the social and emotional needs of pupils and their families. School leaders know their pupils well. They ensure that pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils speak positively about school life and of their admiration for the headteacher who they describe as 'very special because he is fair'.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the various forms of bullying, having taken part in the recent anti-bullying week. They reported that bullying is very rare and is dealt with to their complete satisfaction. Pupils feel safe and know how to avoid dangers both in and out of school. Pupils are clear about e-safety.
- The school's breakfast and after-school clubs provide pupils with a safe and positive start and end to the school day.

- Pupils enjoy fundraising for charity and they are enthusiastic about the school's successful 'grow 100' project, which enables each class to design ways to raise money to send to their partner school in the diocese of Mara in Africa.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- When moving about the school, pupils demonstrate consideration of others and they are polite. During playtimes, pupils respond quickly to the support they receive from adults to resolve small disagreements. Those pupils who find it difficult to use strategies such as discussion, listening to others' point of view and calming down to avoid conflict are sensitively helped to do so through innovative strategies, such as Lego therapy and specialist support from the learning mentor.
- Leaders ensure that there is carefully sourced, sensitive support for pupils who have additional social, emotional and/or behavioural needs. Effective and wide-ranging partnerships with external partners ensure that the school lives up to its commitment of being a fully inclusive school.
- Leaders' work to improve attendance has been very effective. The overall attendance of pupils has improved and is currently in line with the national average. Most pupils come to school regularly and on time because they want to embrace all the opportunities offered by the school.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy receiving rewards for all aspects of their learning, attendance and behaviour. Pupils work hard to remain in the 'green area' of their class behaviour chart and to gain their raffle tickets and stars, which are celebrated weekly.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- At the end of key stage 2 in 2016 and 2017, too few pupils reached the standards expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics, and this led to a decline in the progress made by pupils leaving the school at the end of Year 6. Published progress information, however, does not fully represent the challenges that the school faces from the socio-economic changes in the community, the turbulence caused by the high rates of pupil mobility and the difficulties in recruiting qualified staff.
- Pupils join and leave the school throughout the academic year. Many pupils who join the school have considerable gaps in their learning, and a high proportion are disadvantaged and/or speak little or no English. Despite making rapid progress, those who join the school in Year 6 have too little time to catch up and reach the standards expected of them.
- Following the disappointing outcomes in 2016, leaders reacted quickly to determine why so many pupils who were making good progress in Year 6 did not perform as well as expected in the national tests. Significant training began immediately to ensure that all staff have high enough expectations of pupils and are able to accurately assess pupils' progress. Despite having a positive impact on the quality of teaching, especially in key stage 1, a very high proportion of pupils again failed to make the progress

expected of them in 2017.

- Leaders conducted a thorough evaluation of pupils' performance in the 2017 national tests. They found that the significant proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, especially those who were new to English, took much longer than expected to translate questions and interpret the texts before tackling both the reading and mathematics tests. A number of pupils simply ran out of time and did not answer all of the questions set. Consequently, fewer than a quarter of these pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined. This includes the high proportion of pupils who were eligible for pupil premium funding.
- Current Year 6 pupils are making better progress than many of them have made in previous years because of the teacher's high expectations, expertise and accurate target setting for individuals. Assessments show that most of these pupils are making good progress, particularly in reading and writing. As a result, staff are ensuring that pupils are being prepared well for their move to secondary school.
- Skilled teaching has led to consistent improvement in outcomes in the Year 1 phonics check over time. Only half of the pupils who took the test in 2017 had reached a good level of development in the Reception class and, despite making good progress, fewer than expected nationally reached the required standard. These pupils are receiving effective support in Year 2 and they are making good progress to reach at least the required standard by the summer term.
- In key stage 1, outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics continued to improve in 2017, and the proportion of pupils reaching the highest standards in mathematics was similar to that achieved by all pupils nationally. This represents at least good progress from their low starting points.
- Although pupils' outcomes require improvement, inspectors' observations, teachers' assessments and work in pupils' books demonstrate that more pupils are receiving targeted support to enable a greater proportion of them to reach the standards expected. More pupils are beginning to reach the highest standards in reading, writing and mathematics because staff have an accurate understanding of the targets for individual and groups of pupils within each key stage.
- Leaders ensure that the pupil premium funding enables disadvantaged pupils to receive well-focused support in their learning. This group of pupils receives high-quality support and is currently achieving well. A number of disadvantaged pupils are making similar and sometimes better progress than other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make strong progress from their starting points in all year groups, because they receive timely, specialist support to meet their individual needs.
- The well-designed resources and high-quality support for pupils who speak English as an additional language are particularly effective. These pupils are carefully nurtured when they join the school, and they develop their English language skills rapidly.
- Staff use imaginative ways to promote a love of reading, and pupils are motivated to read the plentiful books available around the school. Most pupils said that they enjoy reading and that they have many opportunities to read to adults in school and in the stimulating library and classroom reading areas. Not all pupils have opportunities to

read to parents at home. The school is aware of the need to actively involve more parents in this aspect of their children's learning to ensure that progress in reading improves quickly.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start in the Reception class with a range of abilities and skills and pre-school experiences. Children's starting points are below those expected for their age and some are well below in the area of communication and language. Careful nurturing combined with effective teaching ensures that an increasing proportion of children reach a good level of development, which prepares them well for their move into Year 1.
- The new leader of early years is ambitious and very effective. She has introduced an electronic assessment system, which is providing accurate information to inform the day-to-day planning of next steps in learning. Children who need to catch up are beginning to do so because they are identified quickly. Parents can access the system at any time because it has been carefully and securely designed. It is too early to demonstrate any positive impact on outcomes for children.
- Adults provide a stimulating, calm and productive environment that takes account of children's needs and ensures that they access all areas of learning. There is a strong focus on developing children's understanding and use of English. Staff are skilful at personalising learning and building on children's interests and experiences. As a result, children make good progress, whatever their starting points.
- Effective teaching ensures that children participate in interesting and engaging opportunities that enable them to apply their skills in reading and writing in a variety of contexts. For example, beautifully presented displays and attractive resources representing the 'Room on the broom' text provide opportunities for children to participate enthusiastically in a wide range of creative activities involving role play, for example writing shopping lists for potions and using new vocabulary and accurate phonics skills to describe their spells.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes have many opportunities to play and work together on interesting activities. A group of children observed were very industrious and chatted excitedly as they removed screws and components from a disused computer, the case of which had been removed. Children were resilient and determined to succeed, and they improved their dexterity as a result.
- Staff ensure that children have their emotional needs identified and met early. Adults encourage children to listen attentively and to establish positive attitudes to their learning. Children learn in an environment of mutual respect. They are well behaved and establish good relationships with adults and other children. Children increasingly understand the importance of taking turns and working together.
- Staff know the children very well and individual needs are well catered for. Arrangements for ensuring that children are safe are in place, particularly for those who are two years old. Consequently, all welfare requirements are met.
- The partnership with parents is a strength of the provision. Parents, particularly those who have little spoken English, value opportunities to stay and work alongside their

children every morning. Good use is made of well designed 'what to expect when' booklets for parents. Parents are kept well informed about the progress that their children are making.

School details

Unique reference number	108269
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10037701

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Milne
Headteacher	Mark Taylor
Telephone number	01924 303625
Website	www.stmaryscephprimarywakefield.co.uk
Email address	office@stmaryswakefield.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 March 2013

Information about this school

- St Mary's C of E Primary School is smaller than the average-size primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below that seen nationally. A small number of these pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school provides full-time places for children in the Reception classes and part-time places for children in the Nursery.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

- The school provides out-of-school care in the form of a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors undertook a series of short, focused visits to classrooms and longer lesson observations in each class. A number of these were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Formal and informal discussions took place with senior leaders, including governors, subject leaders, pupils, parents, a representative from the local diocese and a representative from the local authority.
- Documentation relating to the school's website and safeguarding, including the single central record of recruitment checks, was scrutinised.
- The school's self-evaluation, plans for improvement and analysis of current pupils' attainment and progress were evaluated.
- Pupils' work in different subjects was scrutinised by inspectors alongside senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read individually.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, during break and lunchtimes.
- The views of pupils were considered through the six responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire. Too few responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were submitted for inspectors to consider. The five responses from staff to the online survey were also considered. Inspectors also took into account the responses to the school's own surveys of parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

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