

St Mary's Fields Primary School

Heyworth Road, Leicester, Leicestershire LE3 2DA

Inspection dates

26–27 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
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 school that requires improvement

- In the past, governors have not held leaders to account sufficiently well. There are, however, recent signs of improvement.
- In recent years, the progress pupils have made across key stage 2 has been weak. This is now improving.
- Leaders have not evaluated the use of the pupil premium funding well enough.
- The wider curriculum is not sufficiently well planned to ensure that pupils build sequentially on their previous knowledge.
- Leadership of most foundation subjects is not improving teaching and outcomes for pupils.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can do. Too often, they provide learning that is not matched carefully enough to pupils' needs and this leads to some low-level disruption.
- Teachers do not make effective use of assessment. Too often, pupils' mistakes are not addressed. Sometimes, teachers do not provide pupils with work that will challenge them.
- Pupils across the school do not make strong enough progress in writing.
- A minority of pupils, and parents and carers, have concerns about alleged bullying. Some pupils confuse bullying with inappropriate behaviour.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders know the school well. They are determined that teaching and outcomes will improve. Their recent decisions and the resulting steps they have taken have brought about some rapid improvements.
- Leaders have been successful in improving pupils' attendance.
- Subject leaders for English and mathematics are effective in their roles. The training they have provided is bringing about improvements to teaching. Early reading is taught well.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years because teaching is effective.
- Pupils behave well around school. They are polite and welcoming to visitors.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
 - developing the skills of foundation subject leaders so that they can improve the quality of teaching, and raise standards, in their subjects
 - developing the skills of governors so they can fully hold leaders at all levels to account.
- Improve the quality of teaching, thus raising standards, by ensuring that:
 - teachers make better use of assessment so that any misconceptions are quickly addressed and pupils, including the most able, are provided with just the right level of challenge
 - the new approach to the teaching of mathematics is embedded, enabling pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills
 - teachers insist that pupils use their spelling, punctuation and grammar skills consistently well, including when they write across a range of subjects
 - leaders establish an ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of all learners, enabling them to progressively develop their knowledge and understanding in the full range of subjects.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do, thus reducing low-level disruption
 - teachers insisting that pupils always present their work to the best of their ability
 - increasing pupils' awareness of the difference between bullying and inappropriate behaviour, and what staff will do to help, so that pupils and parents are confident that all alleged incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders, including governors, did not ensure that the school was sufficiently well prepared for the transition from being an infant school to being a primary school. The quality of teaching across key stage 2 has not been strong enough to secure high standards.
- Senior leaders have a clear view of the school's strengths and what needs to improve further. They have rightly prioritised improving the impact of leaders' work and the quality of teaching. There are clear signs that their efforts are giving rise to improvements, but some inconsistencies remain. Leaders demonstrate a strong capacity to improve the school.
- The leadership of English and mathematics is effective. These leaders have a comprehensive understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They have worked closely with external consultants to provide training for staff and to introduce new approaches to teaching in these subjects. They have a clear understanding of where some inconsistencies in approach remain and how they plan to address them.
- The leadership of subjects other than English and mathematics is underdeveloped. These leaders are not improving the quality of teaching and outcomes in their subjects fast enough.
- The curriculum is not well developed. Pupils study a full range of subjects, but the curriculum for subjects other than English and mathematics is not sufficiently well planned to ensure that pupils build systematically on what they already know and can do.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Attractive displays tell of the range of cultures which pupils study, the recycling work of the eco-committee and the school's work to develop pupils' emotional well-being and resilience. Pupils typically show respect when listening to the views of others or when talking about people whose home life may be different from their own.
- Leadership for pupils who speak English as an additional language is well-developed. Leaders give precedence to enabling these pupils to develop their spoken and written English skills. This is well supported by teaching assistants in class. Several members of staff are bilingual and effective use is made of their skills to support pupils who are new to English.
- There are two leaders who share responsibility for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They know the pupils well and ensure that their needs are met. Most pupils with SEND are making strong progress from their starting points.
- Until recently, leaders' plans for spending the additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils have lacked clarity. This means that leaders, including governors, have not been able to evaluate with certainty the impact and success of the spending of this considerable sum of public money. This year, senior leaders have addressed this by ensuring that current plans are more detailed and that they address pupils' barriers

to learning more closely.

- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used thoughtfully to improve teachers' abilities to teach PE and to provide a wide range of sporting opportunities for pupils. Recently, leaders have improved the recording of the allocation of the funds so that they are able to measure the impact more closely.

Governance of the school

- Until recently, governors have been too willing to take at face value the information that leaders have provided. They have not held leaders to account sufficiently well for the work they do.
- Over recent months, governors have taken steps to improve their skills. They now ask more challenging questions of leaders. This is helping them to have a far more accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors demonstrate a determination that they should provide strong governance and that the school will improve rapidly.
- Governors now have a clearer strategy for checking the work of the school for themselves. They make regular visits, talking with staff and pupils and observing the daily life of the school. This, along with senior leaders' encouragement of governors to challenge them during meetings, is beginning to make governors more effective in their roles.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders make certain all the necessary vetting checks take place before an adult starts working or volunteering at the school. They ensure that all staff receive up-to-date training in child protection matters.
- The governor with responsibility for safeguarding meets with the designated leaders regularly to ensure that procedures are fully in place.
- Systems for staff to raise and record concerns about a child's welfare are clearly understood. Records are detailed and securely kept.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. They spoke knowledgeably to inspectors about road safety, cycle safety, fire safety, how to keep themselves safe online and the potential dangers of substance misuse.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders have taken steps to improve the quality of teaching across the school. This is showing early signs of success, including in the progress pupils are making. However, the strategies that leaders have introduced are not used consistently across the school and some have yet to become embedded in teaching.
- The teaching of early reading is effective. Phonics is well taught, and pupils use their phonics skills successfully when they read and when they write.
- A new approach to the teaching of mathematics has been introduced. This is not yet

consistently applied in all classes. Some teachers encourage pupils to explain their mathematical thinking and to practise their problem-solving and reasoning skills frequently. However, this is not fully embedded across the school.

- Teachers do not make effective use of assessment. Too often, the mistakes that pupils make are not addressed by their teachers. In addition, when pupils demonstrate that they have grasped an idea, teachers do not reliably provide pupils, some of whom are the most able, with opportunities to deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- There are times when teachers provide clear explanations for pupils. They use resources well to help pupils understand and ask well-considered questions that will deepen pupils' understanding of the concepts being taught. However, this is not the case across the school. On occasion, pupils are unclear about what they are learning.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils, including those with SEND. Typically, they ask questions that allow pupils to explain their thinking or improve their work. For example, in a phonics lesson, pupils had used their phonics knowledge to write a simple sentence. The teaching assistant encouraged those who completed this task to improve their sentence by adding a conjunction and additional information.
- Pupils' books across the wider curriculum show that teachers do not plan learning activities which develop pupils' subject-specific knowledge and skills well enough.
- There is too much variability in teachers' expectations of what pupils can do. For example, in some classes, teachers expect pupils to write at length regularly to a high standard in a range of subjects, but not in others. Teachers do not insist that pupils use correct punctuation and spelling when they write across a range of subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The vast majority of pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. However, too many do not take enough pride in their work. They do not present their work to the best of their ability. Teachers do not successfully insist on high standards of presentation.
- Pupils have a secure knowledge of the importance of living a healthy life by eating healthily and taking regular exercise. They can learn to play a musical instrument and participate in a range of educational visits. In assembly, they sing with great gusto.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to contribute to the life of the school and the wider community. They can represent their classmates on the school council or the eco-committee. They excitedly told inspectors of their experience singing as part of a mass choir with many other schools. One pupil said, 'It was something I'll never forget!'
- Leaders encourage pupils to play a part in their local community. They make collections for the local food bank and, at Christmas, they sang carols at the neighbouring community centre. Pupils and staff are proud of the rich diversity of cultures in the school and the community it serves. Pupils demonstrate an understanding of British

values. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about a wide range of faiths and cultures.

- A small minority of parents and pupils raised concerns about bullying. Leaders' records of alleged bullying, including homophobic or racist name-calling, show they deal with such rare incidents appropriately. Nevertheless, a few pupils report that name-calling continues, even though it is not commonplace. Some pupils feel that their peers do not always correctly distinguish between bullying and silly behaviour.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Over recent years, pupils' attendance has been too low. Senior leaders have introduced an approach to improving attendance. It is proving to be successful. Attendance is currently broadly in line with the national average, which is a significant improvement on past years.
- Around school, pupils are polite. They are welcoming to visitors and are keen to talk about their school. During recreation times, they play with their friends sensibly. They make good use of the space and equipment available on the playground. Leaders' recent initiative to improve lunchtime behaviour is popular with pupils. At the end of playtime and lunchtime, pupils respond quickly when the whistle is blown, lining up sensibly without delay, ready to go into class for their next lesson.
- In class, the vast majority of pupils share ideas and cooperate with each other respectfully. This was seen, for example, during a religious education (RE) lesson when pupils engaged in a discussion about the meaning of 'judgement'.
- While the majority of pupils behave well, there are incidents of low-level disruption in some lessons. This typically occurs when teachers are not providing pupils with learning that has the right amount of challenge for them.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Published information shows that in 2017 and 2018 too many pupils did not meet the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. Most of these pupils made weak progress from their starting points. They were not well enough prepared for secondary school.
- School assessment information and work in pupils' books demonstrate clearly that current pupils are making better progress. Some variability remains but, in most classes, the majority of pupils are making at least the progress the school expects of them. Standards are beginning to rise, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- Over recent years, standards have risen in key stage 1. By the end of Year 2 in 2018, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading and mathematics was just below that seen nationally. The proportion achieving the higher standard in reading exceeded the national average in both 2017 and 2018.
- Standards in writing by the end of Year 2 have not improved at the same rate as in reading and mathematics. Leaders have recognised this and are taking action to improve the quality of pupils' writing across the school. It is too early for this to have had an impact.

- For the past two years, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has exceeded the national average.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for improvement in the early years. Senior leaders have encouraged the leaders of the early years to visit other settings and draw upon the effective practice they see. In some respects, they have done this successfully. For example, leaders have introduced strategies to improve children's language skills, making effective use of some of the additional government funding for disadvantaged children. Leaders have made some improvements, including in the use of the outdoor space, but the pace of improvement sometimes lacks urgency.
- Leaders know the children very well. Together with the teachers, they consider children's learning carefully, providing them with just the right next steps in their learning to build on what they already know and can do. The quality of teaching in the early years is good.
- Phonics is well taught. Children use their growing phonics skills successfully to read and spell simple words.
- Teachers have established clear routines so that children know what is expected of them. They behave well, following instructions given to them by an adult without fuss.
- Leaders ensure that children make a good start to school life. Leaders make home visits and spend time beginning to get to know the children before they start in the Nursery or Reception classes. Parents are encouraged to contribute to the ongoing assessment of what their children can do by sharing successes at home on 'WOW' cards.
- Leaders make effective use of external agencies, such as speech and language therapists, when this may be useful to help children's development.
- Children typically start in the Nursery with skills below, and sometimes well below, those expected for their age. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the early years has risen since 2016 and is now just below the national average, demonstrating that children make good progress from their starting points. They are well prepared to start Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	120025
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10047642

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	508
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Raj Gill-Harrison
Headteacher	Rebecca Dulieu
Telephone number	01162 824623
Website	www.st-marysfields.leicester.sch.uk
Email address	office@st-marysfields.leicester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 November 2014

Information about this school

- The school has experienced a period of turbulence in staffing and change in pupil population. Over recent years, the school has changed from being an infant school to a primary school and the number of pupils on roll has risen significantly since the last inspection. The school published key stage 2 national test results for the first time in 2017.
- The current headteacher took up post in January 2018. The deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2018.
- This school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- A high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. Over 40 languages are spoken across the school.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils who benefit from the pupil premium funding is broadly average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 29 lessons, or parts of lessons, some of which were observed jointly with senior leaders. They observed pupils' participation in assembly and examined pupils' books from across the school.
- Inspectors held several meetings with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. They met with five members of the governing body, including the chair, and a representative from the local authority. Meetings were also held with a member of staff from the social, emotional and mental health team, and two teachers who are new to the profession.
- Meetings were also held with leaders of English, mathematics, the early years, pupils with SEND and those who speak English as an additional language. Inspectors also spoke with two other subject leaders and the leader with responsibility for the pupils' eco-committee.
- Inspectors met with parents as they brought their children to school and considered the 41 responses to the online survey, Parent View. They considered the 24 responses to the online survey for staff. Inspectors spoke with pupils in class and on the playground, considered the 47 responses to their online survey, met formally with two groups of pupils and listened to three pupils reading.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation of the school, the school development plan, minutes of governors' meetings and documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils.

Inspection team

Di Mullan, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tina Willmott	Ofsted Inspector
Vic Wilkinson	Ofsted Inspector

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