

St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Brampton Road, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire LE13 0NA

Inspection dates

22 to 23 May 2019

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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has established a shared whole-school ethos of care, inclusivity and respect that permeates all the school does.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead a continual drive for improving outcomes for all pupils. This has been particularly successful in improving progress for pupils in key stage 2 and for vulnerable pupils.
- The Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust (DLAT) provides effective support to school leaders, including appropriate training to improve teaching.
- The governors of the school bring a range of valuable skills. Underpinned by effective training and guidelines from DLAT, they provide appropriate challenge to leaders to continue to improve teaching and outcomes.
- Leaders have introduced a range of effective approaches that are securing good teaching across the school. All teachers provide age-appropriate learning opportunities.
- Improved teaching is improving pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics. From their starting points, pupils now make good progress.
- The early years leader ensures that children settle quickly into class routines. No time is wasted in ensuring that children make a good start to their learning. There is a clear focus on giving children the basic skills they need to be ready for Year 1.
- Pupils behave well at all times across the school day. Pupils say that they feel safe, valued and well cared for.
- Pupils are proud of their school and keen to learn. However, not all teachers are equally as skilled at establishing expectations and habits to show pupils how to improve their learning.
- The school uses interesting themes and quality texts to stimulate learning across the curriculum. However, progression is not mapped out well in all subjects to consistently secure pupils' cumulative knowledge and skills.
- Senior leaders are not sufficiently succinct in summarising key information, to ensure that expectations and plans for improvement are clear and consistently understood.
- Leaders' roles and responsibilities are not systematically defined to ensure that they are having consistent impact on moving the school forward.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders summarise key information more concisely and refine identified actions in order to sustain and secure further improvement.
- Ensure that the roles and responsibilities of all leaders are clearly defined in order to continue to move the school forward.
- Ensure that teachers consistently develop pupils' habits of self-checking and improvement in order to be more confident learners.
- Complete the curriculum review to provide a framework that secures consistent cumulative progress in knowledge and skills across year groups and subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has a deep understanding of the context of the school. She has secured a strong team ethos of care, respect and inclusivity that underpins all the school does.
- There is a strong partnership between the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. Their determined leadership focuses on improving teaching and raising pupils' outcomes. They have built on the effective actions that were identified at the monitoring visit in 2017.
- DLAT continues to provide effective support for the school's leaders. Training provided through the trust has improved the quality of teaching and raised standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The appointment of a new chief executive officer (CEO), last summer, has strengthened the partnership.
- The English and mathematics leaders have continued to develop their professional expertise. This has secured some examples of strong practice within the school. They contribute well to the leadership team. However, roles and responsibilities across the whole leadership team have not been systematically mapped out to ensure that inconsistencies in teaching are addressed as quickly as they could be.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the progress and attainment of pupils across the school. Effective frameworks for assessment and tracking have been used well to inform improvements to teaching.
- Senior leaders have a deep and accurate understanding of the school. However, not all documents and systems consistently reflect this. Senior leaders are not ensuring key information is succinctly summarised so that there is consistency in how staff implement key expectations and actions.
- Leaders' accurate use of assessment information has been used particularly well to target support for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders use the pupil premium effectively to ensure that individual needs are met. Disadvantaged pupils are making at least good progress. In some instances, it is stronger than this.
- The leader responsible for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has a good understanding of the needs of the pupils. Senior leaders carefully use assessment information to ensure that appropriate support is swiftly put in place. Pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points. Leaders are tenacious in seeking additional support from external agencies when required.
- Leaders use the additional funds provided through the primary physical education (PE) and sport premium well. They have been particularly successful in raising the participation of disadvantaged pupils. Across the school, pupils are also given many opportunities to take part in external events, including golf, boccia, gymnastics, tennis, cheerleading, cycling and street dance. Staff also make good use of opportunities to work alongside expert coaches to develop their skills and confidence.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Novel study is linked effectively with science, humanities and the arts as a foundation for pupils' learning. Homework links effectively

to this and promotes reading, mathematics and spelling skills. Leaders have in place appropriate and proven frameworks and policies across the core and wider curriculum. However, they are currently reviewing this with DLAT and other schools in the trust to provide a more coherent framework.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted across the curriculum. It is underpinned by the schools' identified Christian principles. Leaders are mindful of the context of their school and ensure that there are opportunities for pupils to develop understanding, tolerance and mutual respect of other cultures, for example welcoming visitors from other faiths. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, including those of young governors, and taking on projects such as improving the school environment.

Governance of the school

- Governance has strengthened considerably since the last inspection. Governors bring a range of skills and experience to the school that contributes well to leadership. Following an external review, the local governing body has a clearer understanding of the key priorities for the school. It has a sharper focus on holding leaders to account to raise standards of teaching and outcomes for pupils.
- DLAT has provided a range of effective training to support the local governing body to fulfil its responsibilities under its scheme of delegation. This places a strong emphasis on local governance. The local governing body welcomes the increased clarity and refinement of the scheme of delegation and associated training initiated by the new CEO.
- Governors know their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and the use of the pupil premium and PE and sport premium. They assure themselves that effective actions are taken and ensure that additional funding is well spent.
- Governors have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Minutes from governing body meetings and reports illustrate their ability to ask school leaders challenging questions. They are frequent visitors to the school and show a high level of commitment to get the best for the pupils and the community. However, leaders are not consistently reporting information with sufficient clarity to enable governors to monitor the impact of their work and identify emerging priorities for improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that staff receive relevant training and updates, including on radicalisation and extremism. All staff understand their responsibilities and are clear on how to report any concerns.
- The trust effectively ensures that the school fulfils its safeguarding duties. It makes sure that necessary checks are completed before adults begin to work or volunteer at the school and it responds quickly to school leaders when additional support is required. The local governing body is diligent in checking school safeguarding

procedures.

- The culture of safeguarding in the school is evident. Pupils spoken to by inspectors said that they feel very safe because they trust all adults to help them sort out any issues. A pupil told inspectors that staff 'do things quickly and get things done' if there is a problem. Teaching children about how to keep themselves safe is given a high priority by leaders. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe online and about water safety.
- Case studies and records show that vulnerable children and their families are effectively supported. Although rare, there have been fixed-term exclusions in this academic year. These are carefully considered, proportionate and stringently logged. Leaders work tenaciously to secure support from external agencies to meet the complex needs of pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Since the previous inspection, there has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching. Leaders have successfully raised staff's expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, pupils are now making good progress.
- Teachers know their pupils very well. In all year groups, there are strong relationships and high levels of respect. These contribute towards pupils' positive attitudes to their learning.
- Leaders ensure that teachers use assessment consistently to plan what pupils need to learn next in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders have provided clear frameworks and teaching resources that ensure all teachers consistently plan for age-appropriate learning. At the end of key stage 1 and upper-key stage 2, there is particularly strong practice, with teachers highly skilled at adapting their teaching to deal with misconceptions or add challenge.
- Leaders are taking effective action to ensure that strong phonics teaching in the Reception Year is more consistently built on in Year 1. In Year 2, pupils are well supported and challenged to develop their reading skills and ensure at least good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders have revised approaches to the teaching of reading. They have invested in quality texts and resources. These have enthused pupils to read more widely. Teachers are successfully developing pupils' higher-order reading skills, such as inference.
- There is a consistent focus across the school to improve pupils' range of vocabulary through detailed novel study and the wider curriculum. In upper-key stage 2, teachers are particularly skilled at developing pupils' confidence to tackle complex questions. Year 6 pupils showed a sensitive and sophisticated understanding of the depiction of 'Big Joe' in 'Private Peaceful'.
- The teaching of writing is a strong feature across the school. Teachers use quality texts to highlight the key features associated with different styles of writing. Pupils then learn to use these skills and apply them in their own writing. Most teachers expect pupils' writing to be of a consistently high standard in all subjects. This means that pupils are consolidating their writing skills effectively across the curriculum.

- Leaders ensure that pupils have a secure grasp of a range of mathematical concepts. Since the last inspection, leaders have introduced effective activities and approaches to improve the fluency and accuracy of pupils' knowledge of number bonds and times tables. Teachers are building on this well to consistently develop pupils' calculation skills. All teachers are planning for opportunities for pupils to use and apply their improved calculation skills. Some teachers are highly skilled at showing pupils how to deepen their understanding and reason effectively.
- In English, teachers are systematically developing pupils' knowledge of spelling, grammar and punctuation. Teachers plan effectively for age-appropriate learning in these aspects.
- All teachers give feedback in line with school policy. However, teachers are not all equally skilled at ensuring feedback is consistently responded to and rapidly moves learning forward. In some classes, for example in Year 6, teachers embed routines and habits of self-checking and give careful guidance that ensures pupils are confident and self-assured learners. This is not consistent across the school.
- Inspectors saw that pupils are enjoying science across the school that is well planned to build age-appropriate learning. Currently leaders are working with DLAT and other schools across the trust to develop a comprehensive curriculum framework that more systematically builds knowledge, vocabulary and skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The strong ethos of respect and care is woven into everything the school does. Staff are consistently strong role models, as is evident in pupils' unanimous high regard and trust of staff.
- Pupils work well together, listening respectfully to teachers and to each other. This behaviour only wavers where teaching is less strong. Peer discussion and sharing of ideas are consistent features in line with school policy. Where teachers provide purposeful and clear guidance, pupils respond well and take a high level of pride in their work.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. However, teachers are not all equally skilled at ensuring that pupils have the skills to be as independent and confident as they need to be in improving their work.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and feel very safe in school. They know who to speak to in school if they have any worries. They understand the different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying, and how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. Pupils said that bullying is rare. They are clear on what to do if it does occur.
- The vast majority of parents who spoke to inspectors and responded to Parent View were very positive about the support their children receive. They are confident that their children are happy and safe. They value the family atmosphere.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils show courtesy and care towards each other and adults, including visitors in the school. Older pupils were continually observed to assist and be caring of younger pupils.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils behave well in class and around the school, and interruptions to learning are rare.
- Pupils enjoy receiving rewards, such as 'fab stickers'. They feel particularly proud when they receive celebration certificates because the headteacher really makes them feel celebrated.
- Pupils take responsibility for their actions and choices, due to a strong ethos of respect. They understand the need for sanctions and consider that adults use sanctions fairly.
- Leaders are persistent in promoting regular attendance. This has ensured that rates of absence and persistent absence have remained below the national averages.
- The importance of good attendance is kept in the minds of parents through termly letters reporting their child's individual attendance and regular newsletters. Leaders use the attendance officer well to support families to improve attendance and to take action where required.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2018, standards at the end of key stage 2 rose considerably, to be above national averages for reading, writing and mathematics. Progress was above average for writing and mathematics.
- Current pupils are making good and often better progress across key stage 2.
- At key stage 1, pupils also make good progress. It is particularly strong in Year 2. However, because of their below average starting points, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 is below the national averages.
- Phonics outcomes have dipped over the past two years, with staffing disruption affecting the consistency of teaching. Leaders' actions have secured stronger teaching this year. Year 1 pupils use their phonics knowledge well to tackle unfamiliar words.
- Leaders are ensuring that additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND is used well. They use assessment information intelligently to tailor specific interventions to support pastoral and academic needs. Pupils in both of these groups are making improved progress.
- Across the curriculum, pupils are gaining the skills and knowledge expected for their ages. However, there is variability in the depth of teachers' knowledge in different subjects. This means that pupils do not consistently deepen their subject-specific knowledge and skills in all subjects as they move through the school.

Early years provision

Good

- Children in the early years begin school with skills and abilities below what is typical for their age.
- By the end of the Reception Year, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development is improving year-on-year and reducing the difference with the national average. This represents good progress from the children's starting points.
- The early years leader sets high expectations across the whole teaching team. She models highly effective teaching herself. DLAT have identified many aspects of her practice as worthy of sharing across the trust. A particular strength is the consistent drive for strong language, reading, writing and number skills.
- Effective assessment systems ensure that children with SEND are quickly identified. The curriculum is adapted to meet individual needs. This is securing rapid progress for children with SEND and others who need additional support.
- The early years leader uses careful, ongoing assessment to plan targeted and structured opportunities to develop skills, particularly in phonics, writing and number. Observations and assessments are used well to inform adults' questioning and opportunities to involve children in thinking through problems. For example, the teacher had been working with a group of children to explore and explain doubles. A child reasoned, 'If that's a double, 10+10 is 20, I think half is 10.'
- Children settle quickly into the welcoming environment. The early years leader places a high level of emphasis on establishing routines and independence from the start. Adults working in the early years provide a wide range of enjoyable and engaging tasks both inside and outside. This means that children work purposefully and maintain concentration on tasks, with or without adult support. The current theme of dinosaurs is particularly capturing their imagination.
- Adults encourage safe play and use of resources. Children are kept safe at all times and are well looked after by caring staff. This ethos ensures that children play happily and fairly together.
- Parents are positive that their children are safe, happy and make a strong start in the Reception Year. Parents value involvement in their children's learning through home visits and day-to-day availability of staff. They welcome workshops that help them to support their child, such as in reading.
- Effective planning, guidance and monitoring are ensuring that all adults in the setting make a positive contribution to the progress children make. Although, as with wider leadership across the school, next steps are not sufficiently refined to ensure that all practitioners are equally swift in moving learning forward.

School details

Unique reference number	139194
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10087377

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust
Chair	Stephen Cooper
Headteacher	Louisa Morris
Telephone number	01664 562 500
Website	www.st-marys-school.co.uk
Email address	headteacher@st-maryscofe.leics.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 to 22 March 2017

Information about this school

- St Mary's Church of England Primary School is a smaller-than-average sized primary school.
- The school became a sponsored academy on 1 March 2013 and is part of the Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust (DLAT).
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language are well below the national average.
- The proportion of girls compared with boys is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across all year groups and phases and visited all classes more than once, amounting to 23 visits in total. A large proportion of observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors listened to pupils read from Years 1, 2, 4 and 6. The inspectors talked with pupils about their school and looked at pupils' books while visiting lessons. The team scrutinised a large sample of pupils' work jointly with the headteacher and other leaders to gain a view of the impact of teaching over time.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders, including leaders responsible for the provision for pupils with SEND, inclusion, English, mathematics and the early years. A meeting was held with representatives of the local governing body, including the chair. A meeting was also held with the CEO of DLAT.
- Inspectors spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. We also considered the 47 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View, including 42 free-text responses from parents.
- Inspectors considered responses from five staff to the Ofsted online questionnaire, as well as talking to staff across the inspection. There were no responses to the online pupils' questionnaire.
- The inspectors observed pupils across the school day, including at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plans, academy sponsor reviews, the school's most recent information on pupils' achievement, information related to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, and the information published on the school's website.

Inspection team

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