

St. Mary's Church of England Primary School

College Road, Purton, Swindon, SN5 4AR

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Almost all pupils make good or better progress and learn well in their lessons.
- Teaching is, for the most part, at least good. It ensures that all pupils, including those who find learning more difficult, make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is good and they say they feel safe and well cared for.
- Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is high. This reflects the willingness of all staff to make the school a safe and supportive place for children to learn in.
- The school is led and managed well. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have successfully improved the quality of teaching and monitoring. This has contributed to improving standards and pupils making progress more quickly than in the past.
- The exciting curriculum, which includes many visits and extra-curricular activities, extends pupils' interests and furthers their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although consistently good, not all teaching is pitched at the right level for all pupils and this slows the pace at which skills improve.
- High quality marking used in many classes is not consistently applied across the school, or in all subjects. Therefore, some pupils do not have enough guidance on how to improve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons or parts of lessons, a number of which were seen with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with members of the senior leadership team, staff, pupils, the Chair and other members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also met with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors took account of 43 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), individual communications from parents and 24 completed staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at: information from the school's checks on its own performance; its analysis and tracking of pupils' progress; school improvement plans; leaders' records of classroom observations; safeguarding arrangements; and records of governing body meetings.
- They also looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and checked on pupils' attendance.

Inspection team

Lucy Maughan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Nigel Ash

Additional Inspector

Neil Gillespie

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St. Mary's Church of England Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care or those with a parent in the armed services, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school provides a breakfast club, which is managed by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further by:
 - using the accurate information that is now available about progress to plan challenging lessons for pupils of all abilities, particularly the most able
 - sharing the good practice seen in some marking so that pupils consistently know how to improve their work
 - ensuring lessons move at a brisk pace so that pupils can be moved onto the next stage of learning as soon as they are ready.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When children join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, their skills are below those expected for their age. They make good progress and are well prepared when they transfer to Year 1.
- Pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language, continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and are currently on track to leave Key Stage 1 with standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above average, which is an improvement from the previous year.
- In 2012, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 was average in English and mathematics, with pupils not making enough progress in reading. Pupils in all years now make good progress and attainment of the current Year 6 is on track to be higher this year than last.
- The school has focused successfully on improving reading, with the clear approach to the development of early reading skills assisting pupils in Key Stage 1, to systematically build on their skills. The proportion of pupils reaching the national standard in the phonics (letters and the sounds they make) check for Year 1 was high. The strong emphasis on reading continues in Key Stage 2, with pupils reading regularly to adults to extend their knowledge and skills at a good pace.
- The school's detailed tracking information shows that pupils are currently making good progress and are achieving well throughout the school, whatever their starting point. This is supported by lesson observations and work in pupils' books.
- Pupils' writing skills are well developed due to the good opportunities they have to practise writing and record their work in the range of subjects they study.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive good quality help and guidance and achieve well as a result.
- In the 2012 national tests, the attainment of pupils supported through the pupil premium was about two terms behind that of their classmates in English and about one term behind in mathematics. Their attainment was similar to that of other pupils nationally in English and better in mathematics. Evidence shows that pupils currently supported by pupil premium are achieving well.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Most teaching is good and some is outstanding. This enables pupils to learn well. There are positive relationships between teachers and pupils in all year groups and this supports pupils' successful learning.
- Teachers plan enjoyable lessons that generally meet the needs and interests of pupils. All lessons have clear learning objectives, and teachers use questioning effectively to reinforce pupils' understanding.
- In the best lessons, where pupils make the most rapid progress, imaginative work is carefully matched to different pupils' needs. Questioning is used skilfully to deepen and challenge pupils' understanding and there are opportunities for pupils to investigate their ideas.
- For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson about money and percentages, pupils were enthusiastically engaged in challenging problem solving tasks that linked with their topic work on Victorian England and the growth in the number of rail passengers. The work was carefully matched to pupils' abilities and so all pupils were fully engaged and greatly enjoyed the lesson. As a result, they made excellent progress.
- In other lessons, where progress is less rapid, pupils have fewer opportunities to take the lead in their own learning. Teachers ask questions that reinforce rather than deepen pupils' understanding and work is not always matched closely enough to their abilities. In these lessons, the pace of learning is slower and pupils do not have enough opportunity to reach the highest levels and make more than expected progress.

- The quality of teachers' marking is variable. In the best examples of marking, pupils are given detailed feedback and comments, together with specific suggestions for improvement to which the pupils can respond. Other marking is less detailed and does not provide pupils with enough information about what they can do to improve.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well in partnership to ensure that effective assistance is given to pupils who need it. This includes pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, those who are eligible for the pupil premium and pupils who speak English as an additional language. As a result, these pupils make progress at the same rate as other pupils in the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Almost all pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and they are notably polite and well mannered. They enjoy work that is set for them and are keen to do well. Only on the odd occasion when teaching does not sustain their interest is there any restlessness.
- Pupils behave well in the playground and around school. Their behaviour at times, for instance when walking into assembly, is exceptional. Pupils understand the school's code of conduct and the consequences of inappropriate behaviour.
- Pupils say they enjoy school. Their enjoyment of school helps to explain why attendance is above average, and almost all pupils are punctual. There have been exclusions in the past year; however, the school has successfully supported these individual pupils during this time.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe. When asked, all pupils spoken to by inspectors said that they feel safe in school. Pupils were aware of different types of bullying and could not think of any bullying that they had seen in school. Pupils said that they were confident that staff could deal with any problems linked to behaviour and bullying.
- Pupils enjoy responsibilities and take a prominent, active role in the life of the school, for example through the well-established school council.

The leadership and management are good

- The highly competent headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides clear direction and vision. All staff and governors are united in their ambition for the school; this demonstrates that they have the capacity for further improvement.
- A systematic programme of checks has led to improved levels of teaching so that pupils now make consistently good progress across the school. Decisions about pay rates are based on the quality of teaching and pupil progress. However, to strengthen leadership and management further, the school should provide all subject leaders with the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning and fully impact on standards.
- School staff are given guidance on how to improve their practice and value the training provided for them to achieve these, including taking on leadership roles and observing other colleagues teach. The views expressed by the staff in discussions and through their questionnaires were extremely positive about their roles in school. They indicate clearly that they find working at the school rewarding.
- Systems to check on teaching and learning are systematic and the evaluation of pupils' tests and assessment results has become more accurate. As a result, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear and accurate picture of how well the school is doing. This information is used robustly to identify and tackle weaknesses and to hold teachers to account for pupils' performance. The local authority has provided good support to help improve teaching, learning and leadership.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively through the school's Christian values, the curriculum, and topics that promote learning and personal development. These raise pupils' awareness of different faiths and cultures at home and abroad. In their project work on 'chocolate' for example, pupils compared the way people lived in chocolate producing countries and investigated the importance of 'Fair Trade'.
- Safeguarding requirements are met. This includes the correct checks on adults working with

pupils in school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The recently re-structured governing body is actively involved in working with the staff to make the school even better. Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are clear about the quality of teaching in school and ensure that systems are in place so that the approval for pay rises is closely linked to how well staff are performing. They have a better understanding of the performance data and, consequently, are more knowledgeable about how well the school is doing. Governors have a good understanding of how the pupil premium is spent and check that the funds are being used successfully. The arrangements to ensure that children are kept safe meet statutory requirements. Governors also regularly attend professional training to improve their practice further.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	126350
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	412151

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	302
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Stephenson
Headteacher	Ian Tucker
Date of previous school inspection	25 May 2010
Telephone number	01793 770239
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