

# St Mary and St John C.E. V.A. Primary School

Church Street, North Luffenham, Oakham, LE15 8JR

**Inspection dates** 28–29 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- The school has tackled the weaknesses identified by the last inspection with success. Under the highly effective leadership of both the interim and the new headteacher, the strong staff team have worked together to raise the achievement of pupils.
- Teaching is kept under close review by leaders and best practice is willingly shared. Good and sometimes outstanding teaching helps the pupils make rapid progress, particularly in reading. Pupils' attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The children get off to a flying start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and benefit from expert teaching and stimulating activities.
- The school makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They concentrate on their work and respond positively to the lively and interesting teaching.
- The school has thorough arrangements to keep pupils as safe as possible and pupils have an accurate knowledge of how to keep themselves safe, too.
- Governors have guided the school through a period of significant change very skilfully and are determined to secure the school's continuing successful future.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in writing is not as rapid as in reading and mathematics.
- Some staff lack experience in using a new process for assessing writing which has recently been introduced into the school.
- Subject leaders have started to undertake a full range of recently introduced checks on teaching and learning. This needs developing further so that it becomes part of normal school practice.

## Information about this inspection

- Seventeen lessons or parts of lessons were observed. Two joint observations were undertaken with the headteacher.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, senior leadership team, a group of pupils, some other staff, the Chair and ex-Chair of the governing body and an adviser from the local authority.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and observed the teaching of reading.
- They sampled pupils' work in different year groups, examined records of pupils' progress and read the school's improvement plan. A range of other documentation was examined, including policies, practice and procedures that relate to safeguarding.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with a member of the local authority's advisory staff.
- The views of staff were sought and 12 responded to a written questionnaire.
- The inspectors looked at the 34 responses from parents on Parent View, the government's website for parents' views about their children's school.
- A letter submitted by a parent was read.

## Inspection team

Peter Sudworth, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Greevy

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- While the school has a small but significant number of 21 pupils from forces families, the proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional government funding for pupils who are looked after by the local authority, known to be eligible for free school meals or from families with a parent in the armed forces is lower than average. Very few pupils are entitled to free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is below average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school manages its own breakfast and after-school clubs. There is a pre-school on site registered with Rutland County Council.
- The headteacher began her duties in September 2013. This followed a year when an interim headteacher had led the school.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching and its impact on pupils' progress and attainment in writing by:
  - ensuring all teachers have a firm grasp on the levels being achieved when they assess pupils' writing and by ensuring they share their evaluations with one another and with staff from other local schools
  - providing frequent opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills and complete extended pieces of writing.
- Support the development of subject leaders by:
  - involving them fully in reviewing the strengths and aspects for development in the subjects for which they are responsible through a range of monitoring activities
  - strengthening their work with the governors who have the responsibility for keeping abreast of subject development so that there is a shared understanding of what requires more work
  - examining data more incisively so that all staff know how well different groups of pupils are progressing in each class and across the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children's attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage is above the level expected for their age. They make good progress and an above average proportion reach a good level of development by the time they transfer to Year 1 because of expert teaching. Communication skills are very well promoted: for example some children know terms such as 'clockwise' and 'anti-clockwise'. They make particularly good progress in reading.
- Throughout the school pupils achieve well. In 2013, higher percentages of Year 6 pupils made the expected or better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics when compared to national averages. Although at a faster rate than seen nationally, progress in writing is not as rapid as in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils reach high standards in reading. Just over half reached the higher Level three at the end of Year 2 in 2013 and just over two-thirds reached Level five in Year 6. A higher percentage of pupils than seen nationally reached the highest Level 6 in mathematics.
- The school promotes reading very successfully and pupils show well-developed reading skills from an early age. For example, a much higher proportion of Year 1 pupils have reached the national phonics (sounds that letters make) standard than seen nationally for the last two years. As they get older, pupils read widely and with enjoyment.
- The good range of experiences that pupils encounter in mathematics, including challenging investigation activities, supports their good progress and helps to develop the pupils' logic as they devise their own strategies in tackling thought-provoking problems.
- Pupils use a good range of vocabulary when speaking in class and listen attentively to their teacher and to one another. This helps with their writing but opportunities are missed for pupils to write creatively and at length and this holds back progress. Pupils take care with presentation and their handwriting is neat.
- Due to the very small number of Year 6 pupils entitled to the pupil premium funding, it is not possible to make comparisons between the attainment of this group of pupils and others. Examination of the progress in other years of pupils eligible for the pupil premium shows that just over half of them are making good progress, with the majority on track to reach end of key stage expectations and with some likely to exceed them.
- Disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs make good progress given their individual difficulties because their learning needs are picked up quickly and close attention is given to helping them overcome problems. Minority ethnic pupils make similar rates of progress to other pupils.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The teaching in English and mathematics has improved since the last inspection because leaders have made sure that best practice is sustained despite staff changes. As a result, teaching is now good, and some is outstanding and leads to pupils' rapid progress. Children receive a successful start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because staff know precisely what young children require to help them do well.

- The school's expectations for good behaviour and pupils' application to their work are consistently promoted. The mutual respect shown between teachers and pupils ensures a calm atmosphere for learning. Pupils understand what they will be learning because teachers generally discuss this with them. Lessons proceed without interruption, supporting pupils' good progress.
- Effective use of well-chosen technical equipment to introduce learning to pupils visually supports their good understanding. For example, using a large screen, the teacher showed Year 5 pupils how to move a shape drawn on a large grid containing negative and positive numbers to a new position. The demonstration helped the pupils' understanding of co-ordinates which they used to solve challenging problems themselves.
- Teachers research the lesson content well and ensure that their own knowledge is accurate and up to date. Consequently, they can answer pupils' questions fully. In a Year 6 science lesson about electricity, the teacher helped pupils understanding about circuitry by giving clear explanations and promoting correct vocabulary use such as 'amps'.
- Effective use is made of learning resources to help develop the pupils' understanding. For example, in Year 2, pupils used straws and coloured counters to try out different orders and formations as they investigated mathematical puzzles.
- Teachers ensure that pupils' work is always marked promptly. They take time to praise pupils for what is done well and identify what could be improved. Pupils are given information about what they need to achieve to complete the National Curriculum level they are working on. As a result, they know how they are progressing and how to aim higher.
- Reading is taught well, contributing to the particularly good progress that pupils are making. For example, specific sessions are used to share books and for pupils to talk about content, characters and plot. The successful partnership with parents means that pupils usefully practise reading at home.
- Grouping pupils by ability enables teachers to cater well for all pupils' next steps in learning. The careful selection of activities moves their learning forward. Teachers make good use of teaching assistants so that pupils have the necessary support to help overcome challenges or for the more-able to move forward quickly. Occasionally, when pupils are seated in small or larger groups or circles, staff are not always mindful of their field of vision. Those seated next to the teacher cannot necessarily see the demonstration and so miss out on an important part of the explanation.
- There are examples of pupils being given opportunities to write for different purposes. For example, in a history lesson, Year 6 pupils wrote about experiences as a soldier in the trenches during the First World War. However, teachers do not always give enough time for pupils to write at length or to practise their writing skills.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils behave well and discussions with pupils, school records and parents' feedback indicate that behaviour is usually good. Pupils report that bullying is rare and, if it occurs, is dealt with effectively. Only very occasionally is there any disruptive behaviour or name calling. There have been no racist incidents and no exclusions. Behaviour in the dining hall, at the breakfast club and out and around the school is good.
- Pupils show very positive attitudes to their work and a good deal of care and concern for each

other. They enjoy school, attend well and are always punctual.

- Pupils respect the environment with little evidence of litter. They fulfil any responsibilities they undertake well, such as helping in the dining hall, putting out equipment for acts of worship or as house captains.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is very thorough. Checks are carried out on all adults to make sure that they are suitable to work with children and staff are trained so that they know the procedures to follow should they have any concerns. Some good work has taken place to raise pupils' awareness of the possible dangers when using computers, for example when accessing the internet. Pupils know what to do if they have a problem in school and are confident that staff will sort it out.
- Pupils take part enthusiastically in after-school activities and appreciate the good range available to them which help nurture their skills and talents.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher has made a very positive start, has quickly established high expectations, built trusting relationships with staff and parents and is leading the school effectively.
- Staff performance reviews are undertaken regularly and are firmly grounded in the 'Teachers' Standards'. A range of activities, such as looking at pupils' work, helps leaders to keep the quality of teaching and learning under close review. Teachers' personal targets link closely to accelerating pupils' progress, especially in writing, and are precise and measurable for impact. Teachers benefit from this approach because they are keen to be the best they can be.
- Subject leaders are gaining confidence and experience in what they need to do to improve the quality of the subjects for which they have responsibility. The growing links with governors who are leading on subjects is a positive feature in moving things forward. There is more work for subject leaders to undertake to check on teaching and learning across the school. They are aware that they need to be more analytical when examining data, including the progress of different groups of pupils.
- Pupil premium money has been well spent, for example on pastoral support for children of forces personnel and extra staff to support groups and individuals with their work. These arrangements help the pupils both emotionally and academically to achieve well.
- The curriculum contains a good variety of work with links between subjects that give meaning and help bring learning alive. Good links with local schools facilitate joint training, such as how to implement the new National Curriculum. However, little has been done to check the levels of pupils' writing with other schools. The school has good links with parents and with the local garrison. A large majority of parents responding to the questionnaire express favourable views about the quality of education provided for their children.
- The school has received its government sports grant. This has been spent wisely, for example on sports coaches and equipment. While it is still too early to assess the full effect on pupils' skills, it has enabled pupils to engage in a wider range of opportunities and uptake in sport has increased.
- The local authority has worked effectively with the school during a period of significant change and continues to provide good support.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has steered the school well during the changes in the school’s leadership and emerged stronger as a result. Governors are prepared to challenge and question and have a developing understanding about pupil progress data to help them keep a careful watch on the school’s performance.
- The governing body has plans to link up with subject leaders more effectively so that they are better informed about the status and development of different subjects and further extend their knowledge about teaching and learning.
- The governing body has been party to the way that the sports grant and pupil premium money has been spent and knows about the resulting benefits on pupils’ achievement.
- Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements. They make sure that the provision of before- and after-school care is well managed.
- Governors are familiar with performance arrangements for staff and the link to pay. They can explain what is being done to improve the school further, including the arrangements in place to tackle any underperformance.
- Governors are keen to improve their individual expertise by attending courses and relevant training.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	120229
<b>Local authority</b>	Rutland
<b>Inspection number</b>	434461

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	172
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jane Mason
<b>Headteacher</b>	Fiona Wilce
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 November 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01780 720184
<b>Fax number</b>	01780 720184
<b>Email address</b>	office@northluffenham.rutland.sch.uk

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