

St Mary's CofE Junior School

Silkham Road, Oxted, Surrey RH8 0NP

Inspection dates

15–16 December 2015

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher is an inspirational leader. She has established a highly positive ethos which has helped to drive improvement since the last inspection.
- School leaders and governors have a clear and uncompromising vision for the school that promotes the achievement of every pupil within a caring community, based on Christian values.
- Governance is excellent. Governors use their wide-ranging skills to the best advantage of the school. They know where the best teaching resides and provide very effective challenge and support for school leaders.
- Senior and middle leaders are leading skilfully their areas of responsibility so that pupils are receiving an engaging and exciting curriculum.
- Teaching is never less than good and much is outstanding. Pupils benefit from the high levels of expertise and depth of knowledge of many teachers.
- Teachers use what they know about pupils' previous learning effectively to plan interesting and suitably challenging activities.
- Pupils make rapid progress from their starting points and attain levels well above national expectations.
- Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils are well supported and, as a result, they achieve as well as other pupils at the school.
- Behaviour in lessons and around school is exceptional. Pupils really enjoy school and this is reflected in their excellent attendance and very positive attitudes to learning.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly successful and is a strong feature of the school. Relationships between pupils and staff are very strong.
- Pupils feel safe and very well-cared-for in this harmonious and secure environment. Everyone is valued and treated with respect.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures that constitute modern Britain, so that pupils are confident in and can celebrate diversity.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The school is exceptionally well led by the headteacher. She has high expectations of pupils and staff and ensures there is a relentless focus on ensuring all aspects of the school continually improve. Staff fully support her vision for excellence, within a caring, Christian community.
- The headteacher is ably supported by the deputy headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, staff and governors. They work together as a highly effective team to help pupils make rapid progress during their time in the school.
- Senior leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness. They use information about pupils' achievement, observation of lessons and reviews of pupils' work very effectively to identify where further improvements are required. However, the school's written self-evaluation and development plan do not show the same insights as those revealed by discussion with leaders; both documents would be more useful if they were more precise.
- Middle leaders are highly effective and enthusiastic in developing teaching and learning in their subject areas. They are determined that all pupils will be appropriately challenged; they devise schemes of work to stimulate pupils and evaluate the impact of their actions on pupils' progress. The subject leader for mathematics has redesigned the curriculum to broaden and deepen pupils' understanding to meet the higher demands of the new National Curriculum, and prepare pupils for secondary school well. The subject leader for English introduced a new method to further improve pupils' reading comprehension; pupils find it straightforward and their skills have improved rapidly.
- The newly appointed coordinator for pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs and disabilities has improved systems for identification of need and provision of support. She has led effective staff training, followed by careful checking of the actions taken and evaluation of their impact. When these pupils are identified as not progressing rapidly, different approaches are used. As a result, these pupils are making the expected progress.
- Staff training has been a significant factor in strengthening leadership and teaching quality. All staff have individual targets for improvement which are linked to relevant training. Whole-school training effectively meets priorities for improvement, such as further developing 'mastery' in the teaching of mathematics. Leaders who have successfully completed national leadership programmes have used their research projects to drive improvements in teaching and pupils' progress. Teachers at early stages of their careers benefit from participation in a local partnership where they share ideas with teachers and leaders from other schools.
- Pupils experience a rich and varied curriculum. School leaders seized the opportunity to establish a new and varied curriculum which encourages a love of learning and a 'growth mind-set'. The curriculum is further enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are well attended by pupils.
- School leaders have introduced a robust system for assessing pupils' work and tracking their progress against aspirational individual targets. Attainment has been well above national levels for the last three years.
- School leaders and governors carefully check the use and impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. The support provided has enabled these pupils to make rapid gains. As a result, outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2 were at or above national averages for all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics for disadvantaged pupils in 2015. Funding is also used to ensure that eligible pupils fully participate in all aspects of school life.
- Pupils' understanding of the fundamental British values of democracy, tolerance and respect are strong because these values are reinforced through the curriculum and throughout every aspect of school life. They are enhanced by the school's emphasis on Christian values. Every day, the whole community is brought together in an act of worship. Pupils participate in a thoughtful and sensitive manner and sing hymns with gusto.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is a strength of the school. Pupils show consideration and respect for each other. Support for a range of overseas charities and regular viewing of the BBC's *Newsround* programme gives pupils the chance to discuss topical issues and to consider differing points of view. Pupils know about different faiths through their religious education lessons. Nevertheless, school leaders acknowledge there is more to be done to develop pupils' understanding of diversity and prepare

them well for life in modern Britain.

- The school uses the additional sports funding to provide a very good range of sporting activities during and after school – run by qualified sports coaches. The physical education subject leader has taken concerted action to improve participation in sport by girls, disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs. The school has achieved the Gold Sportsmark and is invited to share their good practice by leading a cluster of local schools.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They are especially complimentary about how well staff at the school know their children and support and extend their learning. Parents are particularly impressed by the dynamic leadership of the headteacher.
- The school participates in peer review, involving local school leaders and the local authority. While providing useful feedback for school leaders, the review lacked rigour regarding some aspects of the school's performance.

■ **The governance of the school**

- The governing body makes a highly effective contribution to the overall leadership of the school. Governors are aware of the school's strengths and also areas which could be improved. They are ambitious and use their detailed knowledge of the pupils' progress to challenge school leaders rigorously.
- Governors' wide ranging expertise is used effectively to check and support different aspects of the school's work. Governors participate in training and development to enhance their skills and ensure their development matches the school's priorities.
- Governors ensure the school is held to account for the effective use of funding, including the sports and pupil premium funding, as well as staff performance management. They make sure that targets set for the headteacher will have a strong impact on pupils' learning.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are trained to an appropriate level and maintain high levels of vigilance with regard to the welfare of pupils. The vast majority of parents who contributed to the online Parent View questionnaire or who spoke to inspectors said they feel their children are safe in school. Senior leaders are persistent in ensuring referrals to agencies are followed through. Pupils speak with confidence about the approaches they have learned to keep themselves safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Teachers throughout the school are highly skilled at motivating pupils to learn exceptionally well. Their excellent subject knowledge and the school's rich curriculum enable pupils to make very good progress.
- Teachers plan series of lessons which build well on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, including those of the most able. Often, a range of tasks is offered to pupils, who usually select one which will stretch them and extend their understanding. Questioning techniques by both teachers and teaching assistants skilfully support and challenge pupils' thinking and learning. Occasionally, the most-able pupils could be further stretched.
- Mathematics teaching is highly effective, leading to consistently high attainment and progress for all groups. There is a strong emphasis across all year groups on ensuring that pupils gain a secure understanding of mathematical concepts and become adept at solving complex problems.
- The teaching of writing encourages pupils to independently review their work and seek to improve it.
- The teaching of reading is well focused with proportional support to enable the less confident to catch up. Most-able pupils can draw inferences well and give an opinion about the text. One pupil noted 'The girl in the story is just like me – she has got an irritating brother!'
- Within lessons, expectations for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are high and they are given appropriate support to help them complete demanding tasks.
- Teachers in all classes mark pupils' work in accordance with the school's policy. Pupils receive helpful comments to help them improve their work. Many pupils act on this advice promptly, although this varies across classes. In a few cases, pupils do not respond rapidly to their teacher's feedback.
- Pupils know how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve. They recognise the importance of learning and are determined to make the most of opportunities presented to them.
- Pupils receive regular homework to support their learning effectively in reading, spelling, mathematics and topic work. Pupils reported that homework completion is checked weekly. Splendid displays of pupils' homework throughout the school show how such work is valued.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The highly positive culture for learning across the school contributes to pupils' self-assurance. Teachers' work to encourage pupils' resilience in learning is very effective and pupils show high levels of independence in tackling their work. Pupils are prepared to work hard to achieve their goals.
- Pupils can explain confidently how to keep themselves healthy through exercise and positive eating habits. Participation rates at sports clubs after school are high.
- Pupils and parents say that the school is a safe place, that bullying is rare and they know who they can talk to should they have any concerns. 'Worry boxes' are available for pupils to raise their concerns privately and confidentially. Pupils are very knowledgeable about the importance of e-safety.
- There is a strong sense of community, based on Christian values. Assemblies illustrate this well as the whole school bonds together.
- Leaders relentlessly and effectively follow up any concerns about pupils' welfare with other agencies to ensure that appropriate action is taken. Learning mentors work closely with vulnerable pupils to support them through difficulties when they occur.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Relationships are excellent and pupils are fully engaged in lessons and enjoy their learning activities. All adults have the highest expectations of behaviour. Pupils are rarely off-task because lessons are so well matched to their needs.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and friendly towards each other, staff and visitors. They are proud of their school and look after it well. The presentation of their work is of a very high standard.
- Attendance is excellent; pupils value their education and rarely miss a day's learning. Attendance has been above national averages for the past three years and persistent absence has been well below national figures. An analysis of information shows attendance levels are rising further.
- Parents, staff and pupils all agree that behaviour is managed well at the school. There are very few incidents of poor behaviour. There is a consistent and effective response to any boisterous behaviour in the playground.

Outcomes for pupils are outstanding

- Pupils enter Year 3 mainly from three different infant schools. Overall, their attainment on joining the school is higher than that of pupils of the same age nationally. Teachers check carefully pupils' levels of knowledge and understanding during the autumn term. If the school's assessments do not match those from the infant school, leaders liaise with pupils' Year 2 teachers to find out why the pupils might not be progressing so well, and adjust their practice accordingly. As a result, pupils in Year 3 settle quickly and achieve well.
- National test results for Year 6 pupils in 2015 were well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Disadvantaged pupils attained levels in mathematics above other pupils nationally. The school's performance information indicates that current Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve at least as well at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Current in-school performance data are strong and reflect the learning seen in pupils' books. Almost all groups, including disadvantaged pupils, the most able and lower attaining pupils make at least good progress. Pupils with special educational needs generally make at least the expected progress.
- Pupils' writing is of a high standard. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils were absorbed in writing a diary entry, adapting the genre of *Diary of a wimpy kid*. Having constructed well thought-out entries, they regularly and independently re-read their text to check and improve it, before continuing to write.
- Pupils from different starting points make at least good progress in reading. They read with increasing accuracy, fluency and expression.
- In mathematics, Year 3 pupils were observed confidently interpreting data from a range of sources and in Year 6, pupils were enjoying finding a formula for the sum of interior angles of a polygon. In all year groups, pupils' use of accurate mathematical language is a strong feature.

- Pupils' work in all areas of the curriculum shows that pupils are working above the standards expected for their age. This means that pupils are exceptionally well prepared to move onto the next stage of their education.

School details

Unique reference number	125194
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10001496

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	363
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Catharina Stibe-Hickson
Headteacher	Sarah Lewis
Telephone number	01883 712817
Website	www.st-marys-oxted.surrey.sch.uk
Email address	info@st-marys-oxted.surrey.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 September 2011

Information about this school

- St Mary's Church of England Junior School is a large junior school.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children) is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly average.
- The headteacher leads a local infant school two days a week.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons, across all classes, six jointly with school leaders. The lead inspector also visited six classes with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, middle leaders and eight governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority over the telephone.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work, heard pupils read, observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and at lunchtime and talked informally with staff, pupils and parents.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, taking into account the 121 responses on the online parent questionnaire Parent View. Inspectors also considered the 71 free text question responses submitted by parents, and an email. Responses to the 32 online questionnaires completed by staff and 296 by pupils were also taken into account.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including those to do with safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, minutes of meetings of the governing body, records of visits by the local authority, the school's evaluation of its own performance and the school's development plans.

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