

Inspection of St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Hinckley

Station Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire LE10 1AW

Inspection dates:

10–11 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say they enjoy coming to school. They attend regularly. They like the vibrant classrooms and welcoming atmosphere. They feel safe and cared for. Staff know their pupils well and relationships are strong.

Pupils behave well. Respect towards each other is evident and ever-present. Good behaviour is rewarded, and playtimes are calm and happy. There are few recorded incidents of bullying. Pupils are adamant that if bullying happens, it is dealt with quickly and effectively.

Pupils are keen to learn and are ready for new challenges. They are taught how to be resilient and to keep trying. However, pupils do not achieve as well as they should by the time they leave the school. Sometimes, the work they are set is not challenging enough. Teachers do not plan lessons that help pupils to build on their previous learning. There are gaps in what pupils know and remember. They are not as well prepared for secondary school as they should be in too many subjects.

Pupils enjoy and appreciate the range of extra activities they can do. The residential trip is a high point for many. Pupils value the responsibilities they are given and take these roles seriously.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Senior leaders and governors regularly check progress towards the school's priorities. They know what improvements are needed. They are considerate of staff welfare and workload. Governors are getting better at challenging school leaders. However, the speed of improvement since the last inspection has not been fast enough.

In recent years, pupils have not achieved well enough in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders have made improvements to these subjects. For example, early reading skills are now taught in a well-planned sequence. The benefits of this work can be seen in the early years and key stage 1, but not yet in key stage 2. Typically, writing is much stronger than other subjects across the school.

The religious education (RE) curriculum is well planned. Leaders have ensured that teachers know what to teach and when. Subjects such as geography and history are not well planned. There is not enough focus on increasing pupils' knowledge over time. Teachers are not clear about what pupils need to know and remember. There are too many gaps in pupils' knowledge, so they cannot build on what they already know.

Subject leaders are enthusiastic. They have received training to help them with their roles. They are given time to check their subject in different year groups. However, they are not clear enough about how to check the quality of their subject. Often the plans for subjects are vague. They do not outline what pupils should learn, and

when. Subject leaders do not know enough about how well pupils are doing in their subjects.

Reading is now a school priority. Pupils usually read books that match their ability. They enjoy selecting books from the school library. Their understanding of how texts are written is improving. Pupils use their phonics skills accurately to help build new and unfamiliar words. Older pupils are increasing in fluency and accuracy. Focused daily teaching and reading practice is helping with this.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are encouraged to always try their best. They are supported well with their learning in lessons. Reviews of the pupils' needs are regular and timely. The leader for SEND works closely with parents, carers and external agencies. Interventions and support are well matched to the pupils' needs.

Key staff work hard to support pupils and families, and this is visible in pupils' improved attendance. The self-confidence and self-esteem of many disadvantaged pupils has improved and makes them want to come to school.

Staff nurture children's love of school from the day they start in the early years. Children learn in an engaging, stimulating, organised environment. The curriculum is sequenced and well planned. It prioritises children's vocabulary and early reading. Children immediately start to learn sight vocabulary as well as phonics. They are keen to read. Teachers encourage parents to support their children with reading and phonics. Teachers are quick to identify where learning gaps exist. They build on what children already know and can do. They plan well for children's physical development and link this to other learning. For example, children make a 'dinosaur book' and respond to a personal letter by writing a list of food for a dinosaur party.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training and know what to do when a pupil may be at risk. Systems for looking after pupils are rigorous. Leaders work well with parents and other agencies so that pupils get the help they need.

All pre-employment checks are made on staff, in line with statutory guidance. Leaders update governors on safeguarding matters.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in different situations. They know who to go to if they are worried about something. 'Lunch club' is a safe space for pupils to talk about how they are feeling and is used well.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have begun to revise the curriculum but, in subjects other than reading, writing and RE, this has not been effective. There is too much focus on developing skills without consideration of the knowledge that is necessary to underpin those skills. Leaders need to make sure that teachers are clear about what knowledge pupils need to learn and when, in all subjects. They also need to ensure that subject leaders and teachers are confident in the knowledge they need to teach these subjects.
- Senior and subject leaders are unclear about what is happening in some subjects. They are not sufficiently aware of the content or quality of learning in areas for which they are responsible. Senior leaders and governors need to have much better oversight of how and when subject leaders monitor their areas of responsibility. Senior leaders must ensure that subject leaders are properly equipped to improve their subjects. Senior leaders should hold subject leaders to account for pupils' performance.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	120134
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10110040
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	298
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Judith Williams
Headteacher	Rachel Ayres
Website	www.stmarys.leics.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	8–9 June 2017

Information about this school

- This is a Church of England voluntary controlled primary school.
- The school received its section 48 inspection in November 2019, when this aspect of the school's work was graded as good.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During the inspection, we met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders, the leader for the provision for pupils with SEND, and the leader for the early years. The lead inspector met with governors and looked at records of meetings of the governing body. The lead inspector also met the school improvement adviser from the local authority.
- Reading, writing, mathematics, RE, history, geography and French were considered as part of this inspection. Inspection activities included discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons and looking at pupils' work. We talked with pupils and staff about learning. Leaders accompanied us for most of the inspection activities.

- The lead inspector met with the designated leaders for safeguarding to check that safeguarding procedures and processes were effective. Discussions about safeguarding with pupils, staff and leaders took place. The lead inspector met with the leader for attendance and checked information about behaviour and attendance. We scrutinised the record of checks made on staff before employment. We reviewed other safeguarding records.
- We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at playtimes and at other times around the school.
- We reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' improvement plans.
- There were 60 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. There were 27 responses to the staff survey and 23 responses to the pupil survey. We considered the views shared in these responses.

Inspection team

Jackie Stirland, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Dorothy Stenson	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Moore	Ofsted Inspector

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