

# St John's CofE Primary School

Sallowbush Road, Huntingdon, PE29 7LA

**Inspection dates** 11–12 June 2014

|                                |                      |                      |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Requires improvement | 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.

- Good teaching helps all pupils, including those who need extra help and the most able, to make good progress.
- Pupils' work in their books shows that they are achieving well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Progress is improving across the school because of better teaching. As a result, standards are rising.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and are polite and helpful as they move around the school. Their attitudes to learning are positive. Pupils are keen to work hard and do their best.
- Pupils say they feel safe. They are happy to come to school, and this is reflected in rising attendance rates.
- Teaching is improving rapidly. This is because leaders check its quality rigorously and ensure that staff are provided with the training they need to help them develop their skills.
- Leaders and staff are working well together to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement.
- Governors ask leaders challenging questions to make sure they are held to account for their work. They regularly visit school to check for themselves how well pupils are doing.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils in Key Stage 2 do not routinely practise new writing skills by writing longer pieces of work.
- Some teachers show low expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation. As a result, pupils' written work is sometimes muddled and untidy.
- Occasionally, more-able pupils are not set hard enough work and this limits their progress.
- Teachers responsible for leading subjects and other aspects of the school's work are taking the right action to improve the school, but do not check thoroughly what impact their actions are having on pupils' achievement.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons, taught by 11 teachers, and two assemblies. The headteacher joined the lead inspector in observing learning in three lessons. Inspectors talked with pupils, and looked at their work and records of their progress.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work on display. They also undertook learning walks, which comprised a number of short visits to lessons to look at the teaching of reading, including phonics (the links between letters and the sounds they make) and learning across subjects and themed projects.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, staff and members of the governing body. In addition, an inspector talked with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and observed them at play during breaktimes and at lunchtime.
- The school's safeguarding policies, improvement plans, notes from meetings of the governing body and records of pupils' behaviour were reviewed.
- Inspectors took account of the 17 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) and results of their own consultations with parents, as well as the 36 replies to the staff questionnaire. The views of parents were sought at the start of the school day as they brought their children to school.

## Inspection team

|                               |                      |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Sarah Warboys, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Robert Bone                   | Additional Inspector |
| James Fuller                  | Additional Inspector |

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St John's Church of England Primary School is larger than most primary schools. It is expanding to provide 420 places for pupils by September 2017. A new building extension opened its doors in September 2013.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A well-above-average percentage of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding to the school. The funding is based on the number of children at the school in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported by school action is well above average, as is the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- A well-above-average number of pupils join or leave partway through their primary school education.
- A breakfast club, managed by the governing body, operates on the school site.
- Since the previous inspection, a new senior leadership team has been established. Six new teachers have joined the school since September 2013. Two are at the early stages of their teaching career.

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

- Raise pupils' achievement in reading, mathematics and particularly writing, by ensuring that all teachers:
  - give pupils practice in using new literacy skills to write longer pieces of work
  - show high expectations of pupils' handwriting, and encourage pupils to take a greater pride in the presentation of their written work
  - set work at the right level of difficulty to challenge the most able pupils.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - extending the skills of teachers who have leadership responsibilities in checking how well their actions for improvement are working and making sure they raise pupils' achievement.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are well below those typical for their age. Children are given interesting opportunities to practise and develop their skills across all areas of learning and as a result, they make good progress. Above-average proportions of children reach a good level of development by the time they enter Year 1.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 are average. Recent assessments show that they are rising, particularly in writing and mathematics. Standards at the end of Year 6 in 2013 were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Too few pupils had made good progress during their time in Key Stage 2, especially in reading. However, current assessment information, confirmed by the work pupils are doing in lessons and in their books, shows that this year pupils in Years 3 to 6 are doing well and far more are now on track to have made or exceeded the progress expected nationally for their age.
- Young children are taught phonics every day and given lots of chances to use their skills to learn how to spell new words in their writing. In 2013, the proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the required standard in phonics was in line with the national average. The teaching of specific reading skills continues throughout the school in guided sessions with adults. In addition, pupils develop their skills in researching information about other subjects and reading for pleasure. Pupils thoroughly enjoy relaxing on the beanbags with a good book in the school's new library.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Adults plan activities for them that help to build on what they already know in small, easy to follow steps. They give pupils extra explanations and use interesting resources that support pupils' understanding of difficult ideas.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good gains in learning. Teachers and teaching assistants provide pupils with clear pictures and diagrams to help them to communicate and learn new words and phrases. Pupils are encouraged to develop important speaking and listening skills in their own language, which they are then able to apply to English. Most can interchange naturally between their own and other languages as they play and work together.
- Pupils who join at different times of the year, or in different year groups, are welcomed and helped to settle in quickly. Their skills and abilities are assessed early so that they get the extra help they need. Consequently, they make similar progress to their peers.
- The school makes effective use of the pupil premium to support eligible pupils. It provides additional adult support to work with pupils in small groups to fill specific gaps in their knowledge and skills. It also provides one-to-one tuition and support for social and emotional needs, and enables them to enjoy and benefit from educational visits. Those currently supported by the extra funding are doing well and catching up to their peers. The eligible Year 6 pupils in 2013 reached, on average, similar levels to their classmates in reading. They were about six months behind in writing but six months ahead in mathematics.
- The school is using the primary sports funding to promote pupils' healthy lifestyles and sense of well-being by joining the 'Hunts School Partnership Programme'. This provides specialist sports coaches to work alongside staff to improve the quality of teaching in physical education. Sports clubs are now offered after school and this has led to pupils being physically more active. The partnership offers the chance to play competitive sport with pupils from other schools.

- Work in the books of some Year 3 to 5 pupils shows that although they are taught the skills of different types of writing, they are not routinely given the chance to use and apply these skills in writing longer pieces of work. Not all teachers show high enough expectations of pupils' handwriting. Some do not encourage pupils to take pride in the presentation of written work. As a result, these pupils find writing a slow process and their written work is disorganised.
- In most classes, teachers are providing more-able pupils with work that makes them think and work hard and this helps them to make good progress over time.

### **The quality of teaching is good**

- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well organised. Adults directly teach children new skills as well as providing lots of inviting opportunities for them to explore and find things out for themselves. For example, children enthusiastically practised subtraction calculations and developed their understanding of different shapes by drawing them in chalk on the playground.
- Good relationships between adults and pupils are clearly evident throughout the school. Pupils are encouraged to work hard, do their best and 'have a go'. Their efforts are valued and praised by all staff. Such relationships promote a positive learning environment. The vast majority of teachers show high expectations of learning and behaviour.
- Teachers demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the different subjects they teach and use appropriate technical vocabulary accurately. As a consequence, pupils use it confidently and accurately too. Pupils in Year 2 made good progress in writing imaginatively, using different language features such as onomatopoeia, adjectives and rhyme in their writing to describe their recent visit to Hunstanton. As one wrote, 'The cold, wet sea is splashing like a beautiful butterfly. Splash! Splash! Splash!'
- Computer technology is used effectively to engage pupils and this helps to maintain their interest. Teachers frequently provide them with good examples of writing and mathematical tasks. Adults explain ideas and instructions plainly, which enables pupils to be clear about what they are learning and know exactly what is expected of them. This contributes well to pupils' good progress.
- Frequent use is made of discussions in lessons to help pupils clarify and share their thinking. Such shared working supports pupils in being able to talk their ideas through before writing. They make good use of pictures, diagrams, keywords and other prompts displayed on classroom walls to support them in their work.
- On the whole, teachers provide pupils with effective feedback that lets them know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Homework is set routinely. Pupils particularly enjoy the joint projects they are given to do with their families. Almost all pupils say that homework helps them to practise their skills and is 'good for them'. A homework club after school provides opportunities for pupils to do their work at school and make good use of the school's computers and adults for help and advice.
- Occasionally, the work teachers set for more-able pupils does not provide them with sufficient challenge and they do not make the best possible progress.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their positive attitudes to learning in lessons help them to do

well. Staff manage behaviour effectively and pupils are responsive to their guidance. They enjoy earning house points for good work and behaviour. Pupils are proud when presented with a 'cup' in achievement assembly for their 'house'. As one said, 'It makes me feel proud when we get the cup and makes me want to work even harder to get more points.'

- As they move around the school, pupils are polite and show they have good manners towards adults and each other. They are respectful of the area set aside for reflection and are quick to remind visitors of the need to be quiet to allow others to think.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff are positive about behaviour. It has improved across the school as a result of better systems that have been consistently embedded. Its rewards and sanctions are well understood by pupils. One was extremely pleased to talk to inspectors about how his behaviour had much improved and that he was now very focused on learning in lessons.
- On rare occasions when pupils do not have enough to keep them gainfully occupied, the attention of a few wanes and their learning slows.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school and are well cared for. They report a few incidents of bullying, such as name-calling, but are confident that staff will deal swiftly with their concerns. School records show that incidents of racist and homophobic bullying have reduced significantly and occur only on very rare occasions.
- Pupils of all ages demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of keeping themselves safe when using computer technology. Children in Reception learned how to check with adults whether a program is safe for them to use. Older pupils spoke knowledgeably about how to avoid cyber-bullying and not to give away personal information on the internet.
- The breakfast club has provided pupils who attend with an opportunity to meet and play with friends as well as eat a healthy breakfast to help prepare them for the day ahead. According to one pupil, 'Breakfast every day helps my maths and writing because I am energy full for the morning.' The breakfast club has improved levels of punctuality, enabling pupils to start school on time. Attendance has risen from below-average in 2013 to above average because of closer working with parents and more rigorous application of the attendance policy.

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

- Led by a determined headteacher, the school is moving forward at a good pace. Leaders have responded swiftly to previous underachievement, particularly in Key Stage 2. Supported well by governors, staff are working hard to raising pupils' achievement by improving teaching. Good progress has been made on all areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection.
- Leaders use effective systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning. Senior leaders regularly observe learning in lessons and in pupils' work. They look at assessment data to identify where improvements are needed. Teachers at the early stages of their career learn from more experienced colleagues. All staff are set performance targets. Good training and coaching help them to meet these targets.
- Good attention is paid to ensuring that all pupils have an equal chance to succeed. Discrimination of any kind is robustly challenged and tackled. Leaders and teachers meet regularly to check on how well individual pupils are doing. Those in danger of not making sufficient progress are provided with additional support to help them to catch up.

- The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well, enabling children to get off to a good start. Work to support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well organised and effective. Staff work well with outside agencies to enlist specialist help and guidance to support those pupils in need of extra help.
- Most parents who responded to the online questionnaire or spoke with inspectors were happy with the school's work. All agreed their children were safe and happy to attend. A few expressed concerns about the school's leadership. Responses to the school's own questionnaire are overwhelmingly positive and indicate that parents feel the school is led and managed well. Almost all were pleased with the communication between home and school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Subjects are enriched by a range of visits to places of interest and visitors to the school. Pupils appreciate and create their own art and music. Links with the church, alongside the study of the lives of famous people from different religious traditions, help pupils to learn about other cultures. The primary school sports funding has enabled pupils to socialise and compete with their peers from other schools.
- Senior leaders are empowering teachers to take more responsibility by leading key aspects of the school's work. Although they are taking the right action to improve what is offered to pupils, they do not always check rigorously to make sure their actions are improving the quality of teaching in the area they are responsible for, and consequently raising pupils' achievement.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the school's leaders in developing their skills in improving the quality of teaching and learning.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors responded swiftly to the previous inspection report, reorganised their committee structure and made good use of training in order to better fulfil their responsibilities. They understand how well pupils are doing compared to all pupils nationally by making good use of published data. Governors are aware that not all pupils made good enough progress in 2013. They now keep a closer track on the information on pupils' progress provided by senior leaders. Governors visit school regularly and talk to staff who lead different subjects. They keep detailed records of their discussions, and ask challenging questions to hold them to account. Governors support the headteacher in tackling weaknesses in teaching. They have ensured that the management of staff performance is linked to pupils' achievement. Governors keep a check on the spending of the pupil premium and sports funding. They know it is making a positive difference to pupils' progress, healthy lifestyles and well-being. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are secure and meet national requirements.

## 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> | 110818         |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Cambridgeshire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 441985         |

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 controlled             |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4–11                             |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                            |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 264                              |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body               |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Andy Mayes                       |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Kate Lund                        |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 8 November 2012                  |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01480 375026                     |
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