

St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Elliott's Hill, Brixton, Devon, PL8 2AG

Inspection dates 19–20 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The executive headteacher, governors and other leaders across the federation have secured rapid school improvement since the previous inspection.
- Leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, share an unrelenting and highly effective commitment to the continuing improvement of teaching and achievement.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They work and play very supportively together. The pupils' enthusiastic commitment to learning makes a strong contribution to their exceptional progress.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Consequently, pupils say they feel very safe. Parents welcome the high quality of care and guidance provided by staff.
- Pupils' currently high attendance reflects their great enjoyment of school and very supportive relationships between staff and parents.
- Teaching is outstanding. All staff work very supportively as a team to get to know the pupils and plan learning that fully motivates them and develops their skills.
- Pupils sustain rapid progress in all classes in response to consistently strong teaching.
- The well-above-average levels of pupils' attainment in 2014 at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics reflect their outstanding achievement.
- The early years provision is outstanding. Children make an excellent start and quickly develop the self-confidence that supports their love of school and readiness to learn.
- Pupils benefit from a motivating range of learning opportunities, including local and international aspects, which strongly promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- However, pupils have few opportunities to engage in team events and competitions with pupils of their own age who attend other local schools.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited 14 lessons and other learning activities and was accompanied by the head of school for the majority of these sessions.
- The inspector observed morning and lunch breaks and attended an assembly.
- A meeting was held with a representative group of pupils. Specific groups of pupils read to the inspector and other pupils were spoken to during the inspection.
- The inspector met with a group of federation governors. He held a telephone conversation with a member of the local authority staff.
- A number of parents were spoken to by the inspector as they brought and collected their children from school. The inspector took account of 15 parental responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- School staff were interviewed, including senior and middle leaders. The inspector also considered eight questionnaire returns from staff.
- The inspector examined the school's work, and looked at a number of documents. These included the school's own information and checks on pupils' progress and evaluation of the planning and quality of teaching and learning.
- The inspector consulted records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance. He also checked the school's safeguarding policy, procedures and practice.
- The inspector considered the school's primary sport funding action plan. He also examined the school's work in updating procedures for checking pupils' progress within the new National Curriculum.

Inspection team

Alex Baxter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- One in five pupils in the school is disabled or has special educational needs. This proportion is above the national average and varies significantly from year to year across the school.
- The proportion of pupils entering or leaving the school at other than the normal times is above average.
- One in five pupils in the school is supported by the pupil premium and, consequently, given the size of the school, there are very few in each year group. The pupil premium is additional government funding to give extra support to pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after. The proportion of these disadvantaged pupils is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 6.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are admitted on a full-time basis and are accommodated in a mixed Reception and Years 1 and 2 class. All other pupils in the school are taught within a mixed-age Years 3 to 6 class.
- Since February 2013, the school has been a member of the United Schools Federation, which includes three other primary schools. A single governing body serves all the schools in the federation.
- The school and federation are led by an executive headteacher who shares his duties across the schools in the federation. Each school is managed on a day-to-day basis by its own member of senior staff fulfilling the role of head of school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop more shared activities with schools in the local community and across the federation so that pupils can take part and further develop their skills in team events and competitive sport with pupils of their own age.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The drive of the executive headteacher and the vision of the federation that every pupil should receive strong teaching and achieve their best lie at the core of the school's very strong leadership.
- Well-established leadership roles and shared skills across the federation have significantly improved the quality of education for pupils. For example, expertise in the early years provision and practice has contributed to the high quality of teaching and learning now evident in the Reception and Years 1 and 2 class.
- Senior and middle leaders undertake rigorous checks on teaching and pupils' progress. The information gathered provides all leaders and governors with an accurate picture of the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement. This has enabled leaders to tackle any weaknesses and, in particular, to secure consistently high-quality teaching across the whole school.
- Leaders make sure that all pupils, including the most able, have full equality of opportunity in a community that promotes exemplary behaviour and enables them to make excellent progress.
- All staff ensure that procedures for safeguarding pupils are effective and meet statutory requirements. There is no discrimination in this school.
- Leaders give teachers clear targets for improvement that are closely linked to raising pupils' achievement. Staff are held to account in meeting these targets. This practice promotes high expectations. For example, teachers' marking of pupils' work has become a significant factor in helping to raise achievement, especially in literacy and numeracy. The school's successful track record shows its strong capacity for further improvement.
- The school uses the physical education and sport premium well to widen the range of physical activity for pupils. Specialist sports coaches are employed to work with staff and pupils in a variety of physical activities. Leaders carefully check to ensure that funding is having positive impact in improving pupils' health and participation. For example, leaders have noted a seven-fold increase over the past two years in the numbers attending the football club.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to participate in activities, including sports competitions, as members of teams made up of pupils of their own age.
- Leaders use funding for disadvantaged pupils very effectively. They ensure that the funding is well directed to ensure the successful learning of the individuals eligible for the additional support.
- Leaders engage parents very well and encourage them to make very supportive contributions to their children's learning. Help with homework, especially in reading, and warm relationships between staff and parents have lifted pupils' confidence in school and learning.
- The curriculum includes a well-balanced range of learning opportunities that promotes pupils' progress very successfully, especially in literacy and numeracy. Teachers plan and implement the curriculum very effectively. They have ensured that it meets the new national requirements and is supported by a well-considered approach to assessing pupils' progress.
- The school places a strong emphasis on comparing life in the local area and in Britain with life in a variety of places across the world. Residential visits with other pupils across the federation promote pupils' social, moral and cultural development successfully. Close links with the church and assembly themes, such as perseverance, enhance pupils' spiritual and moral understanding and readiness for life in modern British democratic society.
- Since the previous inspection, the local authority has provided additional funding and supported leaders of the federation in bringing rapid improvement. The local authority currently recognises that this is an outstanding school and provides appropriate support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly effective in driving improvement and in meeting its statutory duties. Governors question staff and leaders carefully in accounting for pupils' achievement and in making sure that any pupils at risk of not learning well receive swift support. Governors manage school finance efficiently to secure value for money. For example, they ensure that the extra adult support provided through additional funding accelerates the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Governors make regular visits to the school. They observe the day-to-day life of the school and talk to staff, parents and pupils about their learning. Governors then report back to all members of the governing body to keep them fully informed. The governors also receive very detailed reports from senior staff which help them to keep an accurate view of the work of the school. In particular, governors retain a very sharp understanding of the quality of teaching and the way it ensures that pupils' progress compares well with other pupils nationally. Governors have a good understanding of the performance management of

teachers and how it is used to improve professional skills. They confidently analyse and interpret information about pupils' progress and attainment. They make sure that teachers' professional performance in enabling pupils to make progress justifies decisions on pay.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are well mannered and very polite to all those who work or visit the school. Pupils say, 'Every one knows each other and it's amazingly peaceful.'
- School records show few incidents of inappropriate behaviour and no bullying in recent years. Pupils say that there is no bullying at school because, 'We are really happy, help each other and do our best.'
- Pupils show sincere consideration of each other's views. For example, they represent other pupils' ideas as school councillors to request a covered changing area next to the swimming pool.
- Pupils demonstrate exemplary attitudes to learning and respond very eagerly to the frequent challenges that teachers present to them during lessons.
- Pupils love explaining their ideas to the class and show empathy and understanding when sharing and discussing work together. Pupils' determined contributions to learning greatly enhance their progress.
- Staff work very supportively with parents to develop pupils' self-confidence and raise expectations of what pupils can achieve. This partnership between home and school has lifted pupils' enjoyment of learning and brought current attendance to a high level.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- All staff make pupils' safety the highest priority and follow agreed procedures very closely. For example, leaders manage and maintain the school's facilities very thoroughly and ensure that potential risks are thoroughly assessed to keep pupils safe.
- The building is secure and staff are rigorously checked prior to appointment.
- Pupils say, 'We feel very safe and like the way adults calmly sort things out and keep us safe.' Parents rightly express appreciation of the understanding and consistently high quality of care that staff provide for their children.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including verbal and cyber bullying. They know how to avoid risk and talk seriously about how they have been taught how to use computers safely.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Leaders across the federation and new staff have significantly improved the quality of teaching to be outstanding across the school.
- Parents are quick to acknowledge their appreciation of how much teaching has improved and the very positive impact it is having on their children's learning.
- Across the school, talented teachers and skilled teaching assistants enthuse pupils extremely well about learning. Pupils respect teachers and work hard with them in the knowledge that their efforts are appreciated. They know that if they get things wrong caring adults will 'put them back on the right track'.
- Teachers and teaching assistants set high expectations of pupils' effort and behaviour and, as a result, successful learning is the norm in both classes.
- All staff make every effort to get to know the pupils, including those with special educational needs and the most able. Teachers use assessment information well and know what standards pupils are reaching. They question the pupils and draw considered responses from them to build on their ideas to enhance learning.
- Teachers take careful note of the pupils' developing skills and make sure that future teaching and planned activities keep learning moving forward.
- Pupils willingly offer their views and enjoy developing their ideas even further by discussing them freely. A buzz of enthusiasm and interest permeates classrooms when discussion occurs, reflecting successful learning. This is often the case as teachers successfully develop the pupils' reading skills. For example, teachers enabled pupils in Reception and Years 1 and 2 to joyfully extend their understanding of phonics (the sounds that letters) by repeating them to each other.

- Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and consistently well. They point out what needs to be improved, how pupils can accomplish this, and give them time and encouragement to do so.
- Pupils appreciate the guidance they receive and the way their efforts are valued. This spurs them into working even harder to achieve their best.
- Pupils are clearly motivated to contribute to their own learning and diligently make the necessary improvements. The excellent quality of the pupils' work in books shows that literacy and mathematics are taught highly effectively and that pupils learn these skills extremely well.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Achievement is outstanding because strong teaching enables pupils to make rapid progress over time.
- The well-above-average levels of attainment seen in reading, writing and mathematics in national tests and assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6 in 2014 reflect the trend of improving standards sustained since the previous inspection.
- Most pupils use the basic skills they learn very effectively. Pupils apply their skills to accelerate their progress across subjects. For example, they were seen to confidently express their views verbally about a new computer game with its designers.
- Observations of pupils' responses in lessons also reflect their impressive speaking skills and wide vocabulary. A scrutiny of pupils' work in books provides compelling evidence of imaginative writing and descriptive imagery. For example, when describing a landscape, one Year 6 pupil wrote, 'The snow was dancing around the mountain and the wind was singing with joy.'
- Pupils develop their reading skills successfully in both classes. This is seen in the continuing above-average results in the Years 1 phonic screening checks.
- Pupils read frequently at school, both for enjoyment and to learn across the range of subjects. Most pupils also benefit from reading regularly to parents at home. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the books they are reading and love sharing their perceptive opinions about their favourite story-book characters.
- Pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding receive helpful extra adult support in reading, writing and mathematics. There were no disadvantaged pupils in the Year 6 group of pupils that completed the 2014 national tests. The number of eligible pupils is so small in each year group that it is not possible to compare attainment with classmates or with pupils nationally without identifying individuals.
- School records of the developing skills of disadvantaged pupils and a scrutiny of their work show that they are making similarly excellent progress in English and mathematics to that of other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs benefit from extra support. Close analysis of pupils' learning needs ensures that pupils are supported very effectively and progress as well as their classmates.
- The school identifies and supports the learning and personal needs of pupils entering or leaving the school other than at the normal times. They make excellent progress from their different starting points during their time in the school.
- The most-able pupils relish the thought-provoking and demanding work given to them by teachers. They respond eagerly to the teachers' high expectations and often challenge each other, for example to see who can be the first to solve problems in mathematics. As a result, they make excellent progress and an increasing number of pupils attain high Level 6 standards by the end of Year 6.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Leadership is outstanding. Strong support from senior leaders across the federation has improved the early years provision significantly since the previous inspection.
- Children's achievement during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception and Year 1 and 2 class is outstanding. Children learn across a stimulating range of activities in a secure outdoor area as well as indoors. For example, children develop their mathematical, creative and language skills successfully by counting, drawing and talking about dinosaurs in the 'dinosaur cave'.
- On entry, children's skills vary considerably from year to year across the very small year groups. Mostly skills are typical for their age, but sometimes less developed in speaking and listening and in personal skills.

- Staff are very thorough in getting to know the children and work closely with parents to help settle them quickly into day-to-day routines. Staff work very effectively to keep children safe. Consequently, children learn and play very confidently together, have fun and exchange ideas rapidly to improve their communication and social skills.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers and teaching assistants work very supportively together, set consistently high expectations and provide warm encouragement to enthuse children and promote excellent learning.
- Staff take every opportunity to develop children's responsibility in learning by encouraging children to tidy up and replace equipment carefully after use. Consequently, children behave extremely well and no time is lost moving from one activity to another.
- In recent terms, the teacher has also introduced a very effective system for tracking progress and uses it to plan learning. This situation enables all children, including those with special educational needs, to take part in activities relevant to their interests and abilities.
- Children make excellent progress during Reception. They develop self-confidence as learners to find things out for themselves. By the time children enter Year 1, most have achieved a good level of development across the areas of learning.

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	113478
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	449083

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	42
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Thompson
Headteacher	Martin Harding (Executive Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2012
Telephone number	01752 880436
Fax number	01752 880436
Email address	admin@stmarys-brixton.devon.sch.uk

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