

# St Mary's Island CofE (Aided) Primary School

Island Way West, Chatham, ME4 3ST

## Inspection dates

-13 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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.

- Achievement is good in all year groups. From their different starting points, all groups of pupils make good progress.
- Pupils get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are prepared well for the next stage in their learning.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good with some elements that are outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and improving. Pupils feel safe and attitudes to learning are improving quickly.
- The headteacher has inspired and enabled rapid improvement since the last inspection. Staff morale is high and the school is ambitious to become outstanding.
- The governing body challenges and supports the school strongly. Its members are aware of what the school needs to do to improve further.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Pupils' achievement in writing lags a little behind that in reading and mathematics.
- Despite significant improvement in the quality of teaching, there is scope for more teaching to be of the highest quality.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are improving but, where teaching is less engaging, some pupils' attitudes to learning are not consistently positive, and this limits their learning.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including information on pupils' current progress, improvement planning, the use of the pupil premium and primary school sports funding, checks carried out by leaders on teaching, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors visited 24 lessons, including two that were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- They discussed the work of the school with senior leaders, governors and two local authority representatives.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils. They listened to pupils read aloud, looked at their books and talked to them about their work.
- The inspection team reviewed the responses to 39 staff questionnaires completed during the inspection. They also listened to the views of a range of school staff.
- The team analysed the 44 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, looked at results from the school's recent questionnaire for parents and carers and held discussions with parents and carers. Comments in a letter from a parent or carer were also considered.
- Evidence from monitoring inspections in January, May and October 2013 was also taken into account.

## Inspection team

Robert Ellis, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Fatiha Maitland

Additional Inspector

Jeremy Loukes

Additional Inspector

## Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

### Information about this school

- When the school was inspected in October 2012 it was deemed to require special measures. Improvements were required to teaching, pupils' achievement, and aspects of leadership and management.
- Pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds with around three quarters being of White British heritage.
- Most pupils speak English as their main language but the proportion that is at the early stages of learning English as an additional language has increased since the last inspection.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs identified at school action and the proportion of pupils identified at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are slightly below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast club and after-school club which were also inspected.

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

- Raise achievement, particularly in writing, and improve teaching by:
  - providing pupils with better opportunities to develop and apply a wide range of skills in writing so that progress and attainment in writing are consistently strong
  - providing more engaging situations where pupils can use and apply their knowledge and skills to solve realistic, challenging problems
  - promoting positive attitudes to learning to increase pupils' engagement in and love of learning further.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children enter the Reception classes with skills, knowledge and understanding that are appropriate for their age, but an increasing proportion are below expectations in language, communication and social skills.
- By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, standards are above average. Consequently, pupils make good progress during their time at the school.
- Achievement in reading and mathematics has risen sharply. Reading is taught systematically and pupils now read widely and more often. Pupils say they enjoy reading for pleasure. Participation in a mathematics project has supported rapid progress in mathematics.
- Pupils are taught the sounds that letters make and use their phonic skills well to read and spell unfamiliar words. Year 1 pupils were observed challenging each other to write increasingly complex sentences which incorporated different target words. Some pupils write very well but, although writing is improving, progress in writing has been less rapid than in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium are supported well and gaps in attainment between pupils eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils have closed.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive good quality help and support. Evidence from school information and scrutiny of pupils' work show that almost all of these pupils are making particularly good progress.
- Pupils who arrive at the school speaking very little English are supported well and make rapid progress in developing the language skills they need to be successful.
- The most-able pupils are making better progress than they were at the time of the previous inspection. Their progress is tracked thoroughly and a higher level of challenge in lessons is ensuring they achieve the highest levels of attainment that they are capable of achieving.
- The gaps in attainment between boys and girls have almost been eliminated. The school keeps a close eye on the performance of different groups and makes sure that none is left behind. This demonstrates that the school promotes equal opportunities very well.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is consistently good and ensures pupils make good progress in all classes and subjects.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and use probing questions to identify if pupils have understood what they are learning. Pupils are expected to answer using full sentences and this helps develop their language and communication skills.
- Pupils' books are marked regularly and teachers provide helpful advice. Pupils take advantage of this advice and guidance to improve their work and teachers give them regular opportunities to review their own progress and make improvements.
- Teaching assistants are trained well and work in partnership with class teachers. They lead learning with groups of pupils and, during whole-class parts of the lesson, ensure pupils are listening carefully and understand what they have to do.
- Much of the teaching excites and engages pupils fully. However, there are some lessons which are more mundane and less effective. Pupils particularly enjoyed the recent 'Mission to Mars' activities which brought together different areas of learning and encouraged pupils to use their imagination and problem-solving skills.
- In the most effective teaching, tasks and activities are closely matched to the needs and interests of the different groups of pupils. Teachers are not afraid to change their plans if they find an aspect of the lesson is not working well or if there are unexpected gaps in pupils' knowledge.

- Good relationships between staff and pupils underpin good learning. High expectations and the consistent management of behaviour ensure an atmosphere that promotes good learning and mutual respect.

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

- The school has worked hard to improve behaviour: the behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have a clear understanding of the school's code of conduct and respond positively to the system of rewards and sanctions.
- Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and always attempt to do their best in lessons. A small minority of pupils sometimes lose interest and these pupils need prompting by adults before they continue with their work. Too often, they will stop if they encounter a problem and wait for an adult to come to help them, rather than attempting to find their own solution.
- The school's behaviour records show that learning is seldom interrupted by behaviour issues. The school is successful in promoting equality of opportunity and pupils say discrimination of any sort would not be tolerated. Pupils told inspectors that they knew about the different forms of bullying and said there was very little bullying. They were confident that any instances of bullying would be 'sorted out' if reported.
- Pupils respect the school environment and are kind and helpful to each other. Inspectors saw good behaviour during lunch and break times. Pupils move around the school sensibly and are polite and welcoming to visitors.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good. Pupils say they feel safe and are cared for well. Parents, carers and staff agree. Pupils show that they know how to keep themselves safe around the school site and how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- Attendance is consistently above the national average for primary schools and improving. Pupils are prompt in attending school and a new electronic recording system ensures the few pupils who are late have to sign in before going to class.

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

- The inspirational headteacher has successfully supported and challenged staff, pupils and parents and carers to improve the school. There is now a shared ambition for the school to become outstanding. All staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire were very positive about the leadership and management of the school.
- The school has a rigorous system in place to track pupils' progress, which is used by staff to ensure that pupils make rapid progress and none is left behind. Additional support given to pupils who are at risk of falling behind is effective and helps them catch up.
- Senior leaders check the quality of teaching regularly by visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work and analysing their progress. This ensures that they have the information they need to challenge and support staff to improve further. Teachers' pay progression is closely linked to pupils' progress and whole-school development targets.
- Senior leaders systematically review all aspects of the school's work and have an accurate picture of what is working and what needs to be improved further. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
- Middle leaders have a higher profile in driving school improvement and are taking greater responsibility for improving the areas for which they are responsible.
- The rapid progress made in raising attainment, the improvements to teaching and accurate self-evaluation demonstrate the school is well placed to continue improving.
- The curriculum is planned well and meets the needs of the pupils. The school is looking to make further improvements to provide a more imaginative and stimulating range of activities. Pupils enjoy the good range of visits, visitors, clubs and activities that enrich the curriculum. Pupils were seen to work hard to try and solve the mathematical problems and challenges that are

displayed around the playgrounds.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. The caring and inclusive nature of the school supports their personal development well. Lessons provide pupils with good opportunities to learn about different faiths and cultures and to explore their own attitudes towards others. Pupils responded positively to an engaging, whole-school assembly which they enjoyed.
- The school's sports funding is used well to enhance the skills of staff so they can improve the teaching of physical education in a sustainable manner. More pupils are now involved in sports clubs and the school is participating successfully in local sports events.
- Parents' and carers' views about the school are sought. Parents and carers are more positive about the school than they were at the time of the last inspection. The school is working closely with them to give them the support they need to help their children make good progress in school. Parents and carers who spoke with inspectors were very positive about the support they had been given.
- Pupil premium funding has been used to provide a variety of individual and small-group support activities to promote learning and personal development. These initiatives are having a positive impact on the pupils for whom the funding is intended.
- The local authority has supported the school well, particularly in aiding the development of leadership and management and improving aspects of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body have a good range of skills that enable them to challenge and support the school to improve. Where gaps have been identified, governors have undertaken training to ensure they have the capacity to be effective. Governors know about the management of staff performance and what is being done to improve the quality of teaching. They have a secure understanding of the quality of teaching across the school and conduct their own monitoring and reviews to supplement information provided by school leaders and the local authority. Governors have a good understanding of the school's performance information and know how well the school is doing compared to other schools. Finances are given close scrutiny, and statutory responsibilities to ensure pupils are safe and cared for are met. Governors work closely with the school's leadership and are ambitious for the school to continue to improve to become an outstanding school.

## 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>	132056
<b>Local authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	432594

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	410
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kevin Goad
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christine Easton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	October 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 891050
<b>Fax number</b>	01634 890981
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