

English Martyrs Catholic Primary School

Dewsbury Road, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF2 9DD

Inspection dates 27–28 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- The headteacher is driving the school forward with vision and determination through a very clear focus on the continual improvement of teaching.
- Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their work. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.
- Standards and the rate of progress have considerably improved in the last 18 months.
- Teaching is now good, including in the Nursery class, which ensures that children develop an early enthusiasm for learning.
- Pupils from all backgrounds are warmly welcomed and those who need the most help are well supported.
- Teamwork in the school is good and all staff and governors work well together to ensure pupils are supported effectively in their learning and personal development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in mathematics are not as high as in other subjects.
- Pupils do not develop the confidence to accurately describe what they are doing in mathematics activities and are not able to solve problems quickly enough.
- The quality of teaching is a little variable as is the level of challenge provided. Introductions to activities do not always give the best start to lessons.
- Subject leaders have had few recent opportunities to observe teaching and learning and identify further areas for improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons or parts of lessons. Several of these were joint lesson observations with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed several 'Maths Passport' sessions (short mental mathematics activities), guided reading sessions and listened to individual pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, subject leaders and those with responsibility for the Early Years Foundation Stage and special educational needs. Discussions took place with groups of pupils, as well as with representatives of the governing body and local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 23 parents from the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the responses to the staff questionnaire. They spoke to a small number of parents at the start of the school day and noted information from the school's most recent parent survey.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring information and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sue Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Deana Aldred

Additional Inspector

Paul Plumridge

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average sized primary school.
- There is provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the school's Nursery and in the Reception class.
- The number of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is a little above the national average. This provides additional funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals, from service families or in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs identified at school action is slightly below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is close to the average.
- About 17% of pupils are from ethnic minority groups, with most of these speaking English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher has been in post for 18 months. During the inspection, teaching in three of the eight classes was provided by newly qualified teachers, including two providing cover during staff absence.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and progress especially in mathematics by:
 - making sure that pupils become confident in describing what they are doing in mathematical activities
 - ensuring that all pupils are able to solve mathematical problems speedily and accurately
 - extending the role of subject leaders in rigorously checking on standards and the quality of teaching in order to identify further areas for improvement.
- Ensuring teaching across the school is consistently good with some that is outstanding by:
 - making full use of information about how well pupils have learnt to check that work is well matched to the abilities of different groups
 - checking that the introductions to lessons enable pupils to move onto their work quickly and with a clear understanding of what they need to do.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Nursery class with skills that are often below those typically expected for their age particularly in their social and language development. Some children struggle to explain what they are thinking which remains a challenge for staff throughout the school.
- With good teaching in the Nursery class, children settle quickly and develop an enthusiasm for learning. For example, one group used new words to describe what they were doing when using small fishing nets to catch 'magic balls' in the water tray.
- The progress pupils make throughout the school is mixed but is generally good and has considerably improved in the last year. All permanent staff provided some examples of good teaching.
- By the time pupils leave Year 6, standards are close to the national average and rapidly improving. The sample of recent work inspectors looked at shows that across the school there is a growing proportion of pupils on line to achieve the expected standard. There is also a much better number on track to exceed their targets than in recent years.
- Boys and girls achieve equally well. Those who are supported by the pupil premium funding make similar progress to their classmates and last year did better in their writing than many others. This is because funding is well used to support their learning. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make good overall progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported. They receive specific additional help in lessons and in small group or individual activities which helps them make good progress towards their individual targets. The support for pupils with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties is effective, including at break times, to help overcome their anxieties when mixing with larger groups of pupils.
- Recently, pupils have done better in their writing and in reading than in mathematics. This is because the school has ensured there is an interesting range of topics to write about. Expenditure on new reading books, especially to appeal to boys, has resulted in many saying they really like their new books and are keen to read them.
- Pupils are taught how to develop their understanding of letters and the sounds they make and this shows in the good progress made in reading. Parents and carers also support reading well.
- Pupils are taught the basic skills of how to calculate but many struggle to use an appropriate mathematical vocabulary to describe what they know and are doing. For example, pupils in Year 6 find it difficult to explain what factors are, which limits their ability to solve problems. Several pupils across the school also have quite slow calculation skills, which affect their ability to work quickly and accurately.

The quality of teaching is good

- Improvements in the quality of teaching have been key to the recent rise in standards and the better rate of progress made across the school. There is a strong focus from senior leaders on continuing to improve teaching which the staff team strongly support in their shared determination to raise standards further.
- Staff in the Nursery class are enthusiastic in their approach and ensure that learning is fun and challenging. Good use is made of the classroom base, the outdoor space and the 'indoor/outdoor area' to ensure there are lots of interesting practical activities in which children can take part.
- Across the school, staff ask a good number of questions to encourage the children to join in discussions about what they are doing. There are plenty of well-planned activities where even the youngest children are encouraged to start to learn to write. Because adults give them lots of praise and discuss with them what they are doing, their levels of understanding improve.

- Staff manage lessons well so that most activities are conducted in a calm and purposeful manner. Older pupils can clearly identify their specific targets. They know what levels they are working at and what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers have good expectations of what the pupils can achieve. The planning of lessons is detailed and sometimes extensive which occasionally obscures exactly what the children are to learn.
- Most staff use a range of information to set tasks that contain the right amount of challenge. Where teaching is less effective, staff do not use this range of information well enough and the level of challenge is not always right. Occasionally it is too hard for some pupils and too easy for others.
- The use of time at the start of the lesson is also variable. Occasionally, staff talk for too long that affects pupils' concentration, whereas in other lessons explanations are too brief which leads to some groups not understanding exactly what they have to do. Teaching assistants are often well trained and experienced but their effectiveness in supporting some groups of pupils is variable.
- Staff training activities, including the close monitoring by the headteacher and support from literacy and numeracy leaders has ensured a strong focus on improving teaching. There is now no teaching in school that is inadequate and a growing proportion that is effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Most pupils say they like coming to school and that they feel safe. The large majority are well behaved, polite and helpful to each other and the adults around them.
- Parents' views indicate they feel confident their children are kept safe. Pupils get on well with others and boys and girls happily work together sharing their ideas. Younger pupils say they particularly enjoy playtimes and know they need to move around sensibly to ensure they all stay safe.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is. They know that it is something that is repeated and not just a single falling out. They explain this can be verbal, physical and cyber-bullying and know what this means. They understand what racism is and those from ethnic minority groups say they feel very comfortable and happy in school. All of those spoken to say they know there is always someone that they can share any worries with and staff will take action if necessary.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Most concentrate well and try hard with their work which is often neatly presented. In lessons, most offer their ideas in discussions. However, this is not always so and, for example, even in effective lessons in Year 4 and in Year 6, some pupils do not make much effort to offer their ideas which limits discussions.
- Pupils with additional needs are usually well supported which ensures that their behaviour does not impact on the learning of others.
- Attendance and punctuality are good with awards for regular attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher has made a considerable impact on school improvement since her appointment 18 months ago. She is driving improvement with a determined focus on achieving higher standards. Parents are pleased with the improvements made which they believe is making a positive impact on learning.
- The headteacher is well supported by subject leaders and staff all of whom clearly express a commitment to continuing 'the journey' the school is on. Everyone recognises 'we aren't where we want to be yet' but that strong progress has been made.
- Teachers' performance is monitored closely and senior staff use information from lesson observations and data about pupils' progress to decide whether teachers should be paid more.

This is well linked to a programme of staff training and has led to improvements in some areas.

- Subject leaders make an effective contribution to improving teaching through a focus on reading, writing and mathematics. The school has introduced 'Maths Passport' activities where pupils practise their mental calculation skills, with some early progress being evident.
- Subject leaders scrutinise planning and samples of pupils' work and there has been particular success in writing and reading. The recent monitoring of lessons has mainly involved the headteacher and external advisors. There are clear plans to involve subject leaders more in order to ensure they are able to accurately identify what other improvements can be made.
- The local authority provides support for the school when needed and has recognised the considerable recent improvement. Overall, the school's procedures to check on how well it is performing are good, although occasionally leaders' view of the quality of teaching they observe appears to be somewhat generous.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to make sure that individual pupils get the support they need. This is used, for example, to employ additional teaching assistants to provide extra help and a care worker to support pupils with behavioural, emotional, social and emotional difficulties. There is also training to support those struggling with reading and additional resources for investigations and home/ school reading books. The school assesses the impact of specific expenditure through data which show that those receiving additional help make better progress than their classmates in some areas.
- The school provides pupils with a strong moral code. There is considerable emphasis placed on pupils' social development and encouraging them to take responsibility for their own actions. Pupils also learn more about the cultures and beliefs of others.
- Staff ensure that all pupils have equal access to learning and are provided with a good range of opportunities to achieve well whatever their background and ability. Procedures to safeguard pupils meet current government requirements. Overall, the school has good capacity to continue to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has improved their ways of working since the last inspection by ensuring that they have a more detailed understanding of the school's effectiveness. Governors are taking much greater account of the range of data and monitoring information available to them. They are informed about the quality of teaching and salary progression of staff. This ensures that they are able to ask more challenging questions of senior leaders than previously. They are now able to hold staff to account for the standards achieved and the use of pupil premium funding. Governors have established a clear focus on development planning. They are keen to extend their programme of focussed visits to ensure that they have an even better first-hand understanding of the areas for improvement and are not as dependent on staff for detailed information.

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	108256
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	400972

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Rawlinson
Headteacher	Catherine Flood
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2010
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