

Cottesmore St Mary's Catholic Primary School

The Upper Drive, Hove BN3 6NB

Inspection dates 5–6 December 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

- Pupils enter the school in Reception with knowledge and skills broadly in line with those expected for their age. They then make good progress so that by the time they leave, their achievement is above average.
- Standard in mathematics are especially high by the end of Year 6, while standards in English are above average.
- Teaching is mostly at least good throughout the school.
- The school is aware of the pupils that find learning difficult and supports them effectively in making the best progress that they possibly can.
- Good quality provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development promotes pupils' high self-esteem and confidence. Pupils and parents report that the school's 'family atmosphere' also plays an effective part in the development of these skills. This is further reflected in their good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning.
- The headteacher is an ambitious and effective leader who has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Together with her strong leadership team, and the governing body, many improvements have been generated since her appointment. The team have clear and realistic plans to improve the school still further.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Teachers do not always consistently check pupils' learning throughout lessons. As a result, opportunities to make sure learning meets the needs of pupils are sometimes missed. Because of this, progress is not always as fast as it could be.
- Teachers do not always give pupils enough time to learn and work on their own.
- The curriculum does not yet provide maximum opportunities for learning by fully capturing the needs and imagination of all individuals and groups.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons, two of which were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, with the school's leaders and with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 118 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They also looked at 33 staff questionnaires, taking account of their views, which covered all aspects of school life.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation, including records of the checks made on teaching, the school's plan for improvement, records relating to behaviour, attendance and health and safety checks, and extracts from the school's checks on pupils' progress. Inspectors looked at pupils' written work and listened to groups of pupils read.

Inspection team

Lindsey Diamond, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Wolfson	Additional Inspector
Peter Thrussell	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cottesmore St Mary's is a larger than average primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils come from Catholic families.
- The majority of pupils come from a White British background.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than found in most schools.
- Pupils are taught in single-age classes. There are two classes in each year group.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for extra funding, known as the 'pupil premium', is lower than normally found.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop teachers' skills in adapting lessons to suit the learning needs of individuals by:
 - developing targeted questioning in learning, known as the 'mini-plenary', to ensure that the teacher has a clear view of who understands or does not understand newly introduced learning
 - ensuring that teachers use the knowledge gained from these informal assessments to quickly re-plan opportunities for learning within the same lesson, deviating from planning if necessary
 - ensuring that all pupils are given maximum opportunities within a lesson to work independently and learn by exploring new skills.
- Work to develop the school curriculum in order to provide maximum opportunities for learning and ensure good or better progress for all pupils, irrespective of their age, skills or interests.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When they start at the school, children's skills and understanding are broadly in line with levels expected for their age. They settle quickly into school routines and make good progress during their year in Reception. Strong links with parents and carers support this process.
- Pupils leave Reception and enter Year 1 with knowledge and skills that are above age-related expectations in all areas of development. They remain keen to learn as they move through the rest of the school.
- Steady progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 is sustained for the overwhelming majority of pupils. Where occasionally individuals or small groups are identified as falling behind by the school's robust monitoring systems, programmes are quickly put in place to accelerate learning and gaps are quickly closed.
- Pupils achieve exceptionally well in mathematics. The school is now focused on ensuring that these successes are reflected in English. This shows success, and the latest published figures confirm that pupils' achievement in English is much better than that found in most schools nationally. Internal data, combined with pupils' work, support this by clearly showing good progress in both reading and writing.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been effective changes to the way that reading is taught throughout the school. Pupils of all ages are supported to learn different ways to help them to read. Many know the sounds letters make (phonics) to read unfamiliar text and are given the opportunity to read a wide variety of books. From an early age, pupils develop a love of reading. They are given opportunities to develop the skills that they need through the use of information and communication technology, for example in playing spelling games on the computer.
- During the course of the inspection, Key Stage 1 pupils read with a member of the team. They read confidently, using their reading skills to break down or sound out unfamiliar words. They were also able to show a clear understanding of the book and re-tell it in their own words. During lessons, older pupils demonstrated that they could read with fluency and expression and deduce information from what they had read.
- In line with other pupils in the school, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Pupils eligible for the pupil premium are also well targeted and make good progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the time of the previous inspection.
- Lesson observations by inspectors and the school's internal checks, along with looking at pupils' work, show that the quality of teaching is good over time, with most pupils making at least good progress, because teaching is increasingly focused on the needs of individuals.
- During the course of the inspection, some outstanding teaching was seen.
- When teaching is good or outstanding, teachers are clear about what pupils can and cannot do and give them work to build on current knowledge and skills. This supports good progress. For example, in a Year 5 English lesson, the teacher was adept at stopping individuals and groups to check learning and address any misconceptions, whilst allowing the majority to remain moving on at a good pace in their learning. Sometimes, when teaching is less focused, these skills are less evident and teachers do not ask the necessary questions of learners that help them to assess pupils' understanding. Opportunities are then missed to move learning on at speed. This is an area for development that the school is currently working on.
- Within the best lessons, other adults also play an active role in moving learning on. In a

Reception class, a teaching assistant was working outside with a group of children who were fascinated by the ice in the water tray. She allowed them to explore and discuss this, injecting appropriate questions about heating and cooling, resulting in a sophisticated and independent discussion between the children about the water cycle.

- Occasionally, too much talk from the teacher prevents pupils having the best opportunities to work independently and explore learning for themselves.
- Lessons are generally well planned and take account of the differing needs of pupils. However, not all teachers are comfortable about deviating from their lesson plans when it becomes clear that activities are too easy or too hard for individuals or groups. When this happens, opportunities for maximum learning are missed.
- Regular and thorough marking of pupils' work by teachers ensures that pupils are praised for their efforts. It is generally very clear in directing pupils to next learning steps. Time is left aside in the curriculum to allow pupils the opportunity to review this marking and correct any errors. Pupils are developing the skills to check and edit their own work and take greater responsibility for their own learning.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively within lessons to extend their learning.
- There are very positive relationships between teachers, other adults and pupils. As a result, pupils are keen to please their teachers by working hard.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The strong pastoral care and nurturing 'family' atmosphere helps pupils to develop good attitudes to school. Pupils are polite and respectful towards adults and each other, and supportive of their friends in learning. Pupils say that they enjoy school and that it is a very 'fair' place. Several pupils, from the youngest to the oldest, mentioned this during the course of the inspection. Pupils reported that when they do make wrong choices, they are given the opportunity to discuss this with an adult, with one adding, 'We learn through our mistakes.'
- In lessons, pupils are keen to learn and usually respond with enthusiasm to teachers and the tasks that are set. However, behaviour is not outstanding because, in the few lessons where work is too easy or too hard, their attention wanders and they do not follow teachers' instructions. The vast majority of parents and carers and nearly all pupils say that behaviour is good. This is supported by the views of staff.
- Group work in lesson is often effectively used as a tool to develop pupils' social skills, for example in a mixed Year 1 and Year 2 phonics group where the teacher allowed pupils to take a lead and help each other in moving their learning on.
- It is clear that parents have confidence in the school, not only to provide a good standard of education, but also to keep their children safe. They are also confident that the school will teach their children the skills necessary to keep themselves safe beyond the school.
- Pupils say that bullying is not an issue at the school. They are clear about different types of bullying and how to stay safe, including when using the internet. One group of Year 5 pupils were able to clearly explain why some internet sites were blocked in school and why they all had their own password to access the sites that were available to them.
- Pupils clearly enjoy and value their school and this is reflected in the significantly higher than average attendance. Punctuality is generally good. Any pupil lateness is robustly monitored by the school and families are supported to ensure that pupils are at school in time for learning. Pupils move around school swiftly and sensibly, ensuring punctual starts to lessons.
- The school deals appropriately with the few pupils on role who have challenging behaviour. During the course of the inspection, appropriate strategies were seen from teachers to ensure that these pupils were able to take part in learning.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is an ambitious and effective leader who has a clear vision for the school. Since the previous inspection, she has worked effectively with governors to create a strong senior leadership team that is focused on raising the quality of teaching in order to raise standards.
- A clear and effective tracking system has been put in place. As a result, the school is able to quickly identify where progress is less than good and put in place systems to accelerate learning. Based on the accurate picture of learning that this gives, the headteacher and the leadership team meet regularly with individual members of staff to discuss the progress of individual pupils.
- Evidence was seen of these systems being very effective.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and is used effectively to set school priorities. This has led to a wide range of improvements since the previous inspection. This constant drive to enhance opportunities for pupils indicates that the school has good capacity to improve still further.
- Staff performance management is well organised and is used effectively as a tool for supporting teachers' professional development in order to enhance opportunities for learners. Targets are based upon pupils' progress. Salary progression is based upon performance.
- Leaders and managers make sensible spending decisions. This is illustrated by the robust monitoring of progress of pupils in receipt of the extra funding called the 'pupil premium'. Evidence seen during the inspection indicated that their learning has been accelerated effectively by this extra funding.
- The school works hard to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils within the curriculum. It is generally well planned to match pupils' needs and interests. However, at times, it does not focus specifically enough on ensuring that all pupils are given maximum opportunity for good or better progress.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral development is well supported through collective worship and the religious education programme. Cultural awareness is promoted through charitable work and strong church and community links. Pupils have the opportunity to experience different cultures through links with schools abroad.
- The school has fostered very good relationships with parents and carers. When questioned, either through questionnaires or face to face, the overwhelming majority of parents and carers expressed confidence in the leadership of the school.
- Local authority support has decreased as the school has become significantly more effective over the last two years, but remains proportionate to need.
- All day-to-day health and safety measures are in place and the school ensures that all pupils are fully aware of all aspects of e-safety.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well through visits and regular meetings with the headteacher and staff. They are fully committed to the school and to its improvement. Many governors have specific roles in the school and are well known to staff, parents and pupils. There is an effective committee structure in place that enables the governors to check pupils' achievement, including the impact of the pupil premium funding, and how well the school is doing compared with others. Training has also enabled them to be aware of strengths and relative weaknesses in teaching. They are fully involved in performance management of teachers and the headteacher and ensure that pay progression is linked to staff performance.

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	114567
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	405523

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	437
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Towers
Headteacher	Rachel Holland
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 December 2010
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