

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Henley-in-Arden

Arden Road, Henley-in-Arden, B95 5LT

**Inspection dates** 11–12 December 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Outstanding leadership has improved teaching and pupils' progress considerably in the last year, and raised behaviour from satisfactory to outstanding.
- Leaders continually review the school's work and ensure that any shortcomings are tackled by all staff as a very effective team.
- Achievement is good and continues to improve rapidly. Many pupils made excellent progress over the course of last year.
- Teaching is good, with an increasing amount that is outstanding. Teachers plan work that excites and interests pupils. They usually set work that is at just the right level of difficulty.
- Teachers benefit from sharing good practice with colleagues across the federation, so that they all learn from each other. This, and clear feedback from senior colleagues to help them improve, has driven up quality.
- Teachers use the close tracking of each pupil's progress to ensure that anyone who needs extra help gets it. This ensures that all pupils do well.
- Children get off to a great start in the Reception Year, settling very happily into class and making excellent progress. This is a major improvement since the last inspection.
- Pupils behave extremely well in class and around school. They work very hard, are exceptionally keen to do well and greatly enjoy learning. Their relationships with each other are outstanding. They feel exceptionally safe and secure in school.
- The excellent links with parents mean that they are overwhelmingly positive about the school and what it does for their children.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There has not been enough outstanding teaching to make achievement outstanding. In some lessons, inconsistencies in applying good practice can slow learning for a few pupils, although progress is seldom less than good for the great majority.
- Despite the rapid improvement in achievement last year, attainment remained average at the end of Year 6. This was because of the slow progress these pupils had made in previous years when teaching was weaker.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed substantial parts of seven lessons. Many of these visits to classes were joint observations with the executive headteacher or with the head of school. The inspector also spent time in the youngest class to assess the quality of the curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Discussions were held with pupils, all the teaching staff, the executive headteacher and the head of school, a member of the governing body, and with a representative of the local authority.
- Samples of pupils' work were examined and the inspector listened to several younger pupils reading.
- The inspector took account of 19 replies to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and also examined the results of the school's own parental questionnaire.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at playtimes, lunchtimes and around the school generally.
- A variety of documentation was examined, particularly the school's records of pupils' progress and information about how they are kept safe.

## Inspection team

Steven Hill, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a very small primary school which has three mixed-age classes. Reception-aged children share a class with pupils in Year 1.
- The majority of pupils are White British, with about a quarter coming from a variety of other backgrounds. Those of Asian or Irish Traveller heritage form the largest groups. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding (which is provided to support the learning of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and children of armed services families) is above average.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, who are supported at school action, school action plus or have statements of special educational needs, are broadly average. These figures vary considerably between year groups and from year to year.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection, the school has entered a federation with two other small Catholic primary schools in the same diocese. The work of all three schools is overseen by an executive headteacher and by a single governing body. There is a head of school, who leads and manages St Mary's on a day-to-day basis
- Since September 2011, the school has had considerable changes to staffing, including in senior leadership, and has grown in size.

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

- Raise standards and achievement through making more teaching outstanding and eliminating lessons that require improvement by:
  - always checking throughout lessons that tasks are challenging for more-able pupils
  - ensuring that groups not working directly with an adult make good progress, by always checking to see that they have not misunderstood what is wanted and challenging them to improve their work
  - refining the marking of pupils' work so that teachers' suggestions are followed up consistently, and successful pupils are set further challenges.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well, regardless of their ethnicity or background. Progress has improved remarkably in the last year and continues to accelerate. Pupils who had previously underachieved during a time of major staffing disruption have made up a lot of the ground they had lost previously. The group who left in 2012, for example, made excellent progress during Year 6, but their attainment was still somewhat below average.
- Pupils entitled to support from the pupil premium do just as well as their classmates, and much better than such pupils nationally. Boys and girls achieve similarly well, although last year, in some classes, girls did better than boys in writing. The school has addressed this well and boys are making similar progress to girls in their writing this year.
- Children start in the Reception Year with skills that cover a broad range but are generally similar to those expected nationally. Provision has improved substantially for these younger children. This was an area that required improvement at the last inspection but it is now a major strength of the school. Last year, children made excellent progress during their time in Reception and their attainment when they started Year 1 was above average. This year's Reception children continue to do very well.
- Pupils' progress in reading has accelerated, and they are doing much better now in Key Stage 1 because of a better focus on learning how letters in words relate to the sounds they represent (phonics). In national phonics tests, all Year 1 children reached the expected level last year. Older pupils continue to extend their literacy skills well across Key Stage 2.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do just as well as their classmates because work is carefully matched to their particular needs, and adults provide a well-judged balance of support and challenge to help their progress.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers are very skilled at planning interesting and practical activities for pupils that engage their enthusiasm and develop their learning well. Excellent links are made between different subjects. The work of the oldest pupils on Antarctica, for example, is fascinating and includes aspects of mathematics, literacy, geography and history in the same lesson.
- Staff gently but relentlessly stress positive moral and social values to pupils, and insist on politeness and consideration for others; this supports pupils' excellent behaviour. In class, expectations of hard work and behaviour are very high and, because relationships with adults are very positive, pupils work hard to meet these high standards.
- Teachers consistently plan to give different work to pupils of different abilities. This is usually very successful in ensuring that work is neither too easy nor too hard. Occasionally, in parts of lessons, tasks do not challenge the higher-attaining pupils enough, or these pupils have to wait a little while for their classmates to catch up before moving to the next task.
- Teachers explain things very clearly and make excellent use of interactive whiteboards to clarify and illustrate ideas, as well as giving pupils good opportunities to use computers themselves.
- Pupils are given many excellent opportunities to discuss their ideas together before they write about them, or to make notes on small whiteboards during the course of lessons. These strategies strongly support collaborative skills, and have greatly contributed to enthusing boys to write. This has resulted in an upturn in their progress.
- In most lessons, adults keep a very careful eye on how different groups are getting on, quickly intervening to correct any misunderstandings but also challenging pupils to refine and improve their work. Occasionally, misconceptions are not spotted early enough, so individual pupils do not make enough progress. At times, if adults are involved with specific groups, opportunities are missed to check up on groups working independently and to encourage them to do better.
- Pupils' written work is marked thoroughly and teachers' comments show clearly what pupils have

done well and tell them where they have gone wrong. Often, teachers suggest extra tasks or corrections for pupils to practise things they have struggled with, but these are not consistently followed up. There are few examples, in marking, of teachers challenging pupils who have got everything right to try something more difficult, and so move towards the next level.

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

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is exemplary. They are extremely keen to learn, concentrate hard and take a delight in their successes. They listen attentively to their teachers, contribute their own ideas enthusiastically and settle quickly to tasks without wasting time. They are very persistent, tackle difficult work diligently and are not fazed by problems they encounter.
- Pupils' excellent relationships are seen in their outstanding collaborative skills. They share ideas and equipment cheerfully, listen carefully to each other and readily reach agreement before getting on with their work.
- Pupils take on responsibilities willingly and enjoy formal roles such as librarians, being members of the school council or road safety officers. Even more impressive is the way that pupils show initiative and concern for others informally. Older pupils take it upon themselves to look after younger ones, reassure them if they seem worried, or play with them if they are bored.
- Boys and girls of all ages play together happily, regardless of background, and play energetic games safely and with tolerance for each other. The older pupils showed great understanding and forbearance when some of the youngest children joined in a lively game of football, for example.
- Pupils' great enjoyment of school and of learning is reflected in their much-improved attendance, which is now above average, having been below average two years ago.
- Pupils show a very secure understanding of different kinds of bullying. They remember a great deal of what they learned in a recent anti-bullying week. They say there are not concerns about bullying in this school, but they are very clear what they should do should problems arise.
- Pupils' great confidence in the adults, contributes to pupils feeling extremely safe in school. Asked about the best things in the school, a group of Year 5 and 6 pupils quickly agreed it was 'the teachers'.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The executive headteacher and the head of school work together extremely effectively, and have built a staff team which has high expectations, and is focused on improving pupils' progress and behaviour through better teaching. High-quality systems keep track of pupils' progress and of the quality of teaching and learning. Improvements over the last year have been rapid, and are being sustained this term.
- An excellent range of subjects and activities supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Exciting lessons are supplemented by visits out, such as the day spent in Moseley, where pupils greatly enjoyed meeting new friends from very different backgrounds. Very good use is made of specialist music teaching provided by the local authority. Older pupils made excellent progress in their understanding of rhythm and notation in a lesson during the inspection. Outstanding provision in the Early Years Foundations Stage includes excellent use of the outdoor area, which had been flagged as a weakness at the last inspection.
- There are excellent links with parents. The school has been exceptionally successful in ensuring that parents who might otherwise find working in partnership difficult are fully involved and able to support their children, through helping with homework, for example. Responses to the online questionnaire were entirely positive.
- Pupil premium money is spent on extra adult help, and equipment, which is carefully tailored to the specific needs of the eligible pupils, both socially and academically. This helps them to be fully included in all aspects of school life, and achieve as well as their classmates.

- Excellent use of the expertise across the three federation schools enhances teachers' skills and knowledge. This continues to expand, to make the best use of the specialist skills of all staff. The local authority ensures that suitable support is provided to the school, which has been tailored to its needs, and reduced as the school has improved and become, because of the federation, much more self-sufficient.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have a wide range of expertise and extremely good systems to understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are able to hold it to account for its performance, and do so. They have ensured that high-quality performance management arrangements are in place and properly linked to staff pay, and that pupil premium money is spent wisely and effectively. Governors ensure that they keep up to date so are able to give the right balance of challenge and support to staff. They have an excellent understanding of safeguarding, for example, and have ensured that procedures meet 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>	125711
<b>Local authority</b>	Warwickshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	406324

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 Aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	50
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Richard Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jacqui Le Maitre (Executive Headteacher) Rachael Perry (Head of School)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 January 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01564 792316
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