

# St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School

Howson Road, Brockley, London, SE4 2BB

## Inspection dates

13–14 December 2012

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Actions taken by leaders, such as improving the quality of teaching have not maintained the good rates of progress since the school's previous inspection.
- Although pupils generally reach average standards in national tests, they do better in English than in mathematics.
- Teaching varies too much between different year groups and is not securing good rates of progress for pupils.
- Activities in lessons are not always matched closely enough to pupils' abilities, especially for the more able.
- Teacher's verbal guidance and marking, does not consistently help pupils to get better at their work and they are not given enough time to respond to areas they need to improve on.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders at all levels are now determined to build upon the recent improvements in pupils' achievement.
- Pupils behave well and show good manners to each other and to adults around the school and the enjoy attending.
- The school's distinctive church based ethos helps pupils develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through planned activities in lessons.
- The school has benefited from local authority and Diocesan led training opportunities to improve the work of staff and school leaders.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons, three of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work, the quality of marking, and listened to some pupils from Years 1, 2 and 6 read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, and school staff including senior and middle leaders. A discussion also took place with two representatives from the local authority.
- Safeguarding documentation was looked at, as well as incident logs, information on pupils' progress, records of meetings held by the governing body, and the school's checks on its own performance.
- Inspectors also took account of the views of 39 parents through the Ofsted 'Parent View' website and written communication from parents and a member of the governing body.

## Inspection team

Peter Lacey-Hastings, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jill Thewlis

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Mary's Magdalen is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It is a voluntary aided Catholic primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is much higher than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action and school action plus is average. The proportion of pupils with a statement for special educational needs is also average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, the additional funding provided by the government, is similar to most schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Ensure teaching is good or better across the school by:
  - increasing the pace of teaching to motivate pupils and help them make more rapid progress
  - giving pupils clearer help on their next steps of learning through more frequent checking in lessons and improved marking in books
  - allowing pupils more time to respond to marking in their books beyond letting the teacher know they have read their comments
  - using information on pupils' progress to identify areas of weakness in their learning and to plan teaching that targets these areas to improve more directly
  - challenging more-able pupils' learning so they make faster progress, especially in English work.
- Ensure leaders at all levels bring about quicker rates of progress for all pupils by:
  - extending the use of senior leaders so that they share and demonstrate their good teaching to help other teachers understand what effective practice looks like
  - using information on pupils' progress more skilfully to identify actions to remedy weaker areas of their learning
  - making stronger links between subject leaders and members of the governing body in order to share responsibility for improvements and so staff can share reasons for their actions more directly.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because the school has not maintained the good achievement noted in the previous inspection. Progress often varies from class to class as there are variations in teaching.
- Pupils' level of skill on entry into the Reception class varies from year to year, but is broadly average overall. They generally leave with levels expected, however each group of children do not always make sufficient progress from their differing starting points. They achieve better in their personal, social and emotional skills and their creative and physical development.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils across subjects generally achieve in line with expectations. Over the last two years, pupils' attainment in writing has been above average, but this has not been matched in mathematics.
- At Key Stage 2, all pupils' rates of progress require improvement, although levels of attainment are in line with expectations. In the past mathematics has been weaker than English, but this is now closer to national averages. Last year the Year 6 pupils made better progress in mathematics from their starting points at the beginning of Key Stage 2. In English, these pupils made expected progress.
- Pupils read with enthusiasm and interest. Last year pupils in Year 1 attained well in their national phonics (linking letters with sounds) check. Pupils generally read confidently, but sometimes the books read are not challenging enough for them.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those with statements for special educational needs, is similar to other pupils. Their achievement is better in English than it is in mathematics. Overall achievement for these pupils requires improvement.
- Those for whom the school receives the pupil premium, and those who speak English as an additional language, make similar progress to other pupils in the school. As a result, these pupils do not make more significant gains in their learning.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement as it varies across year groups in the school and has declined in quality in some aspects. It is not yet securing good rates of progress consistently. The pace of teaching is sometimes too slow, and opportunities to motivate pupils to learn more quickly are missed. This means progress is limited in some lessons.
- Teachers do not always use information about pupils' progress to plan lessons and activities that match their learning needs. This includes giving more-able pupils greater challenge in their work, especially in English.
- Teaching in the Reception class varies too much over time and is not consistently good. Children have opportunities to play and learn across all areas of learning, giving them a range of experiences. However, routines and expectations that adults set do not lead to children making good progress. Where children work with adults they make better progress. However, children's ability to work on their own is not as good as it could be. This is because children's enthusiasm in their play is not always directed into purposeful learning.
- In Key Stage 1 teaching is not yet bringing about good rates of progress over time. Where teaching is better pupils' interest and motivation are directed into learning. As a result they work for longer periods of time, try harder and produce a good level of work.
- In Key Stage 2, teaching has strengths in English and mathematics, but is weaker in other subjects. In better taught lessons, teachers let pupils know what they need to do to show their learning. For example, in a mathematics lesson pupils were asked to stop and check their work, and individuals were praised for showing that they have made good progress.

- Other feedback, including marking, is inconsistent and doesn't always give pupils enough guidance on what to do to improve their work. Pupils also need more time to respond to marking in more depth beyond showing that they have read teachers' comments.
- In their reading pupils show enthusiasm and enjoyment. They have a range of reading skills such as knowing words by sight, using picture clues and using phonics (linking letters with sounds).
- However, pupils do not always read with expression or use punctuation to help them read sentences accurately. Sometimes the level of reading is too easy and does not challenge pupils enough.

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

- Behaviour around the school is good and pupils show good manners to each other and to adults. Adults are also respectful to pupils and are good role models in this respect. Relationships in the school between pupils and adults are good.
- Pupils know about different forms of bullying and say there is very little bullying in the school. They know what to do when a problem happens and say problems are dealt with well. Pupils agree that behaviour is generally good.
- Behaviour in better lessons is good because it is well managed and directed into learning. However, in some lessons where expectations are lower, minor low-level disruption means that pupils are not always engaged in the learning and this limits their progress.
- Children know about safety issues and what makes an unsafe situation. For example, they know and understand safety rules when the weather is icy. They also understand the need for gate security, visitor badges and correct first aid procedures.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend to high levels. There are good systems in place to reward high attendance which the pupils understand well.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Leaders and managers at all levels recognise that important aspects of the school require improvement because the impact of actions and have not been effective in maintaining the school's overall effectiveness since the previous inspection.
- Current leaders, however, are establishing themselves as a team and managing important changes more effectively, such as appointing a high proportion of new teachers. This is beginning to speed up rates of progress and levels of attainment, especially in mathematics.
- Improvements are currently being better managed during a time of change. For example, pupil progress meetings are used more regularly to identify how teaching can be improved. However, these changes have not yet had time to result in good rates of progress for a long enough period of time.
- The school is more settled following changes in teaching staff and this has made the school leadership stronger. The new leadership team now knows the school well. Senior teachers are starting to demonstrate more effective teaching to others, but this is not fully effective across the whole school.
- Systems to check on pupils' progress are at an early stage and the use of this information does not yet lead to accurate evaluations of how well pupils progress over time.
- The local authority produced a termly review which helped the school to identify areas for improvement, although checks on assessing how well weaknesses are being remedied have not been sufficiently rigorous.
- The school provides a broad range of activities through topic themes. Other opportunities also support the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Events and visitors inform pupils about their world and the diversity of the United Kingdom. For example, a

trip to the Houses of Parliament raised their awareness of their roles as citizens.

- Spiritual awareness is also a strength of the school, through its church dimension and also through planned work in lessons. For example, in one lesson pupils were asked to write story ideas in response to listening to music. This helps them develop their imagination and creativity. Opportunities also exist for pupils to explore deeper human experiences such as love, humility, courage and justice.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors recognise that school needs to address some declines in its effectiveness. Links between members of the governing body and subject leaders have recently begun to bear fruit, but routines are not yet strong enough to help governors know the school better and hold leaders to account more rigorously. Members of the governing body also work with the local authority and Church Dioceses, such as training on school improvement. Governors are knowledgeable about how the pupil premium is used, such as the use of extra adults and internet-based learning so pupils can learn more at home. They are beginning to hold the headteacher to account for its use and for the progress pupils make. Members of the governing body are trained in how to use performance targets to challenge the headteacher and are aware of the link between teachers' salary, promotion and performance. For example, they have a better understanding of information on pupils' progress, and what needs to be improved. Safeguarding requirements such as vetting checks on adults are correctly checked and health and safety routines are well established.
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## 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>	100720
<b>Local authority</b>	Lewisham
<b>Inspection number</b>	402830

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>	204
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Daniel Mahony
<b>Headteacher</b>	Graeme McGlasson-West
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 March 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8692 5055
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