

St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary School

Weston Crescent, Aldridge, Walsall, WS9 0HA

Inspection dates 12–13 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 make good progress across the school. Progress in reading is particularly strong.
- Teaching is good. Teachers use the information about pupils' learning to plan activities that enable most pupils to make at least expected progress and a majority to make faster progress than this.
- Pupils' attitudes are exemplary and make a significant contribution to the positive relationships and good learning in lessons.
- Good behaviour and the fact that bullying is very rare ensure pupils feel safe and are happy in school.
- The headteacher's excellent leadership has resulted in rapid improvement since her appointment last year.
- The whole staff team, governors and pupils embrace the school's vision for learning and have all been instrumental in improving teaching and pupils' progress since the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always change activities and tasks during lessons when they find that they are too easy or too difficult for some pupils.
- Pupils are not always given enough time to make improvements to their work in response to teachers' marking.
- Some more-able pupils do not make the progress they could because tasks are not always challenging enough in lessons.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 literacy and mathematics lessons taught by eight teachers. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons to observe learning in art, history, science and information and communication technology.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at past and current information about pupils’ progress, pupils’ work in books and on display, and documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour, staff training, monitoring and school improvement planning.
- Inspectors held meetings with small groups of pupils, staff and representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- The inspectors talked to parents and carers informally at the start of the day and took into account 28 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school’s own survey.

Inspection team

Georgina Beasley, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Steve Howland

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary School is an average-sized primary school.
- Nearly all pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs supported through school action is average; the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive extra funding from the government through the pupil premium is below average.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consolidate improvements in the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by ensuring teachers always:
 - use information about pupils' learning during lessons to adapt tasks when they turn out to be too easy or too difficult
 - give pupils enough time to respond to the short tasks and/or questions that teachers set to extend pupils' learning after marking their work.
- Further improve the progress of more-able pupils by ensuring activities always interest and challenge them enough in lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start Nursery and Reception with knowledge and skills that are appropriate for their age. They make good progress and almost all reach the levels they should by the time they start in Year 1 in all areas of learning. A good number do better than this. This reflects good improvement since the previous inspection.
- Children make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development which prepares them extremely well for learning in Year 1. They confidently share their learning with adults and each other, and make suggestions about how to improve their play. During the inspection, children worked well together to count presents into the sacks before carefully deciding where to put them on Santa's sleigh.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 to 6. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs as well as those supported by the pupil premium make the same good progress as their peers from their starting points.
- Progress is particularly strong in reading. More pupils than average reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics test last year ensuring that by Year 2 most pupils read a varied range of books and texts confidently. Pupils in Year 3 to 6 read widely for pleasure and to find information to support their studies in a range of subjects. Standards have been above average by the end of Year 6 for the last three years with an increasing number of more-able pupils making better than expected progress. However, more-able pupils do not always make the very fast progress they are capable of because of the lack of challenge in some learning activities.
- Pupils make good progress in writing and mathematics, and attainment is currently above average. There are a very few pupils who do less well in writing than they do in reading, especially those who are more able. This is because their writing has not in the past developed the more complex grammar and sophisticated vocabulary required to reach the higher levels. The school is addressing this well.
- Successful steps to improve girls' learning in mathematics across the school have resulted in no significant difference in attainment this year compared with the boys. 'Maths is fun,' was expressed by more than one pupil including girls and boys. Practical activities help pupils to calculate, find patterns and identify relationships between numbers and shapes, and so solve real-life problems quickly.
- Pupils' achievement in other subjects is good. Pupils practise reading, writing and mathematical skills through other subjects and use computers to look for information. They write instructions for playing games or making beans on toast and measuring and graphing distance, weight and temperature in science.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good across the school. Some teaching is outstanding. Teachers look carefully at the information they have about pupils' progress and learning to plan activities that interest them and motivate them to learn. Planned activities and tasks meet the different abilities of most pupils in lessons. More-able pupils are not always challenged enough in some lessons and too often they complete the same tasks as other pupils but with less support.
- Teachers and teaching assistants question pupils to check that they understand what they are learning. They give successful additional support or explain further if they find any lack of understanding, which helps disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to achieve well.
- Teachers and teaching assistants, however, do not always change the tasks and activities or move on to the next part of the lesson quickly enough when they find that some pupils can already do what is being asked or others still cannot do the task after the additional explanation.

This is also the case in the Nursery and Reception classes when pupils work on a particular task with an adult.

- Teaching is most successful in the Nursery and Reception classes when the children have the freedom to choose what and where to play. At these times, adults constantly talk to the children about what they are doing and why. As a result, the children have good speaking skills which support their learning in reading and writing well.
- The marking policy is understood by pupils and so they have a clear understanding of what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Pupils are not always given the time to complete additional tasks and answer any questions set by teachers in all classes every day.
- The learning atmosphere in lessons is highly positive. Pupils are confident to ask questions and for help if they do not understand and are not afraid to try new things, knowing that if they get things wrong they will learn by their mistakes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Attendance is high and has been for several years in all year groups. Pupils arrive in school ready to learn. Their highly positive attitudes ensure that the day and their learning get off to a brisk start.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Pupils feel able to talk to any adult who works in the school about any concerns. They know that they are listened to and that any concerns will be sorted out quickly and effectively. Instances of bullying are very rare because pupils understand what bullying is, including its different forms, and take any occurrences as seriously as adults. As a result, pupils overwhelmingly said that they feel safe in school.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and respectful towards each other and adults. Reward for good behaviour is all most pupils need to help them follow the rules. There are very occasional instances of unacceptable behaviour which the school manages well. Parents and carers are positive about the school and almost all feel that behaviour is managed well. They all feel that their children are safe in school.
- Pupils have excellent opportunities to make a positive contribution to the life of the school. They value being able to represent their classmates on the school council, to act as play leaders and house captains and to carry out jobs in the different classes. They play a full and active role in the local community, for example running fund-raising events for charity, attending church services and performing music for community groups.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads a whole staff team which is focused on raising standards across the school. Since her appointment, she has built on the strong start made by the interim headteacher to establish an ethos and vision that are bringing about rapid improvement to teaching and therefore to pupils' learning and progress.
- Detailed information about pupils' learning and progress is analysed closely to see if one individual or group is doing better than another. As a result, the school quickly picked up that girls did less well in mathematics, that boys did less well in writing and that pupils born in the summer months reached lower standards at the end of Year 2 than other pupils. Subsequent actions mean that gaps in skills and learning are closing for these groups across the school.
- The school has robust systems in place to check the quality of teaching and learning and to ensure that actions make the difference they should to pupils' progress. Staff attend relevant and effective training to improve and to keep up to date with the latest good practice.
- Extra funding from the government, the pupil premium, is spent wisely. An additional member of staff, as well as teaching assistants and the deputy headteacher, work closely with eligible pupils. In addition, the school makes sure that pupils are never prevented from taking part in

relevant activities because their parents or carers cannot afford to pay. The school strives at all times to ensure that there is no discrimination of any form.

- The good curriculum provides interesting opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their speaking, reading, writing and mathematics skills in different topics. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils have an excellent understanding of their own religions and good insight into their own and others' feelings. European and multicultural weeks provide good opportunity for pupils to learn about cultures and countries other than their own, which prepares them well for life in Britain.
 - Links with parents and carers are good. Regular newsletters ensure parents and carers know what is happening in school and when. Nearly all feel that any concerns that they have are managed well.
 - The local authority gives the school good support. In March 2010, it supported the interim headteacher in introducing policies and systems which kick-started the improvements to teaching and, subsequently, pupils' progress. The local authority has taken more of a back seat now that improvement is sustained.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is effective. All governors have attended relevant training to help them support and challenge the school well. Governors are acutely aware of what the school does well and what needs to be improved due to the detailed information they get from the headteacher, and regular and focused visits to events and classrooms. Decisions by governors about staff pay are informed by whether teaching is good enough to ensure pupils meet their progress targets in each class. Governors pay close attention to budgetary issues, including checking carefully on how the pupil premium is used. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. There is effective oversight of the breakfast and after-school clubs where pupils enjoy a varied range of activities, which gives them a positive and safe start and end to the school day.
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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

Unique reference number	104240
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	402939

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	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Michael Leadbeater
Headteacher	Claire O'Hara
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 November 2007
Telephone number	01922 743411
Fax number	01922 745935
Email address	postbox@st-maryangel.walsall.sch.uk

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