

St Swithun Wells Catholic Primary School

Hunters Hill, South Ruislip, Middlesex, HA4 9HS

Inspection dates

12–13 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils are justly proud of their school and make excellent contributions to school life. They make outstanding progress and achieve excellent results.
- The school has a calm and purposeful atmosphere where pupils feel very well cared for and safe in a very secure environment.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. They care for one another's safety and welfare and are extremely courteous and respectful to adults and each other.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and the work they do in lessons. Their attendance is well above average.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Senior leaders have quickly raised the expectations of teachers and pupils and established a clear vision of excellence. Staff at all levels feel valued and supported and fully support the vision for the school.
- The way the school reviews and improves the quality of teaching is rigorous, very effective and fully embraced by teachers.
- The school offers a broad curriculum which provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and personal qualities. They have many opportunities to take on important responsibilities. Pupils would benefit from even more opportunities to work on their own and have more choice in how they tackle activities.
- Teaching is highly effective. Teachers have high expectations, excellent subject knowledge and make very good use of the information from assessments to improve pupils' achievement.
- The governing body has a wealth of relevant experience and is well informed about the school. Governors provide excellent support and challenge to the school's senior leadership.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons, two jointly with senior leaders, several part lessons and one assembly. They looked at pupils' work, listened to some of them read and talked to groups of them about their experience of school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders, three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and teachers. Some parents and carers were canvassed about their views of the school as they escorted their children into school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documents, such as school policies, records of pupils' progress, school self-evaluation and associated action plans, governors' minutes, attendance data and incident logs.
- The inspection team took into account 24 responses to the staff questionnaire, the views of 37 parents and carers from Parent View and one letter from a parent or carer.

Inspection team

Jim McVeigh, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Kate Rumboll

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Swithun Wells Catholic Primary School is an average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average at 37%, and 15% are from other White backgrounds. The other main minority ethnic groups are of African and other ethnic groups.
- Around the national average number of pupils have English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well below the national average at 3.4%.
- There are a small number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. There are 5.4% of pupils at school action and 4.15% who are at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. Both of these figures are below the rates found nationally.
- The school has a nursery on site and holds the Healthy School status.
- The school offers no alternative provision.
- The school has met the government's floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase further the opportunities provided for pupils to work on their own by setting more problems in lessons for pupils to research and solve for themselves and giving them more choice of which topics they study.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children's skills on entry to the Nursery are variable but usually around age-expected levels or below. They make an excellent start because the school provides a vibrant and stimulating environment in the Nursery that engages children in learning straight away.
- They continue to make well above the expected progress in Reception and by the time they enter Year 1 their attainment is significantly above the national average.
- Pupils have a very secure knowledge of phonics (the sounds letters make) because of excellent teaching. Year 1 pupils performed exceptionally well in the recent national phonics screening test. Low-attaining readers showed very good strategies to pronounce unfamiliar words when reading to inspectors.
- Pupils' writing develops very rapidly. They make very good progress in their spelling, use of punctuation and in the complexity of sentences they write.
- Virtually all pupils, including those from different minority ethnic and other ethnic groups, make at least the expected progress and much higher numbers make more than expected progress than nationally, particularly in mathematics and writing, because the school sets challenging targets for each class, checks performance often and provides effective support to any pupils who fall behind.
- When pupils leave school their attainment in English and mathematics is significantly higher than is found nationally. Current pupils are on track to achieve even more highly this year.
- The school makes close checks on pupils' progress and ensures that they achieve as well as they can. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups achieve as well as their peers because they are identified early and effective support is provided for them. Pupils eligible for extra pupil premium funding make the same outstanding progress as others in the school because the school supports them well.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is never less than good across the school, and much is outstanding.
- Teachers analyse performance data regularly, identifying pupils who are underachieving and taking effective action to bring them back on track. Other adults in lessons are well trained and give very good support to pupils.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and have excellent attitudes to learning. Lessons are well planned and include a good variety of activities which meet the learning needs of individuals. For example, Year 6 pupils worked excitedly and diligently on different activities to calculate the areas of triangles and compound shapes and made outstanding progress. Teachers draw on their very strong subject knowledge to question pupils skilfully and to set them demanding tasks, to which pupils respond with great interest and enthusiasm.
- Teachers have very high expectations of pupils and what they can achieve. They provide opportunities for pupils to work on their own, and very good display in classrooms about literacy and numeracy support independent work very well. Year 1 pupils made more than expected progress when they were enthusiastically preparing to write a letter to Zog (a dinosaur character). The teacher gave them clear steps to success and regular feedback on their progress.
- Teachers are enthusiastic, manage their classes very well and have excellent relationships with pupils. Pupils like and respect their teachers and contribute very well to their lessons. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson pupils worked in pairs, discussing seriously how to solve word problems and then presenting their findings to the rest of the class.
- There is an excellent focus on language development which supports pupils learning English

as an additional language particularly well. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is a strong emphasis on phonic development and application. Children are encouraged to talk about their discoveries while playing and adults model correct pronunciation very well.

- Teachers have very good knowledge of phonics and pronounce the sounds letters make very accurately, show clearly how to make the sounds and encourage pupils to practise them.
- Teachers regularly give very good written feedback to pupils which includes constructive comments and questions that extend pupils' understanding further. Pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve and achieve their individual targets.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour contributes extremely well to the success of the school and the calm, purposeful, happy atmosphere, which is strongly underpinned by the Catholic ethos. Pupils behave courteously and with consideration for others in lessons and around the school. Their extremely positive attitude to learning promotes a strong work ethic in lessons.
- Pupils understand the system used to encourage good behaviour and attendance very well. They are given roles of responsibility which they carry out with pride, such as playground buddies and school council representatives. Pupils have a great caring attitude. One Year 4 boy said that 'the reason we behave so well on the playground is we look after each other'.
- Pupils show great pride in their school and enjoy their lessons. They feel that teachers treat them fairly and help them achieve really well. Relationships between all groups of pupils and with staff are outstanding. Attendance is well above average and has been so for the last three years.
- The school council has an important role in the school. Pupil representatives meet regularly, carry out school surveys and help influence how the school is run. Pupils speak of bringing about improvements in the amount of sports equipment and new playground waste bins.
- School records show very low levels of inappropriate behaviour because all staff, including lunchtime supervisors, apply the behaviour management system consistently. Bullying is rare and is quickly dealt with. Parents and carers, staff and governors share the view that behaviour is very good.
- Pupils learn about how to be safe on the roads and on the internet and how to lead healthy lives. They know about the different kinds of bullying, including cyber bullying.

The leadership and management

are outstanding

- The school is extremely well led by determined senior leaders who focus on excellence in all areas. These leaders set the tone for the school, are the driving force for new initiatives and are excellent role models. They are very well supported by other leaders with particular responsibilities and have brought about rapid improvement in teaching and achievement since the last inspection. The school has an accurate understanding of its own performance.
- Senior and subject leaders ensure that the progress of each pupil is checked closely and any not making sufficient progress receive effective additional support until they make the required improvement. Pupils' learning journals record key milestones in their achievements and 'golden' folders contain key pieces of work that support teachers' views of their progress.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed extremely well. The learning environment for children is very engaging. Children's development is fully recorded through photographs, examples of children's work and teachers' observations. Adult interventions in children's play and exploration are very positive and make a significant difference to learning. There is an excellent focus on language development.
- Arrangements for performance management and teacher appraisal are very robust and closely linked to the government's Teachers' Standards, pupils' achievement and teachers'

progress on the pay scale.

- St Swithun Wells is truly 'a learning school'. Continuing training is an important element in the school's success. Senior leaders regularly identify the individual and whole-school training needs. Staff frequently attend relevant courses, for example on teaching writing and e-safety, or have in-school training and feel valued and well supported.
 - The school provides very good support for parents and carers to understand the work of the school and help their children at home. There have been several workshops, such as for phonics and information and communication technology (ICT), and school website information on mathematics, English and reading, including problems to solve with children at home.
 - School leaders make rigorous checks on the quality of teaching through observations of lessons, looking at pupils' written work and teachers' planning.
 - The curriculum offers a good breadth of topics and provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils experience a good range of cultural and educational visits and visiting groups. For instance, they have visited a synagogue, farm and zoo and engaged in an African music workshop and worked with a theatre group on a sex and relationships programme.
 - Literacy and numeracy are promoted very well across subjects in topic work. Pupils' reading diaries encourage parents and carers to listen to their children reading at home and pupils read regularly for pleasure. Pupils spoke animatedly about the characters and actions in the books they had chosen to read.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a high level of expertise, for example in ICT, banking and social work, and challenges the school leaders robustly as well as helping the school make well-informed budgetary decisions, such as in how the pupil premium funding should be spent to best effect. Governors are kept very well informed through reports from the headteacher and subject leaders and their own observations of the school's work during their regular focused visits. They know about the quality of teaching and the results of teachers' appraisals, and share the senior leaders' views on teachers' movement up the pay scales. They have been well trained to understand the data that the school provides for them, including how the school's performance compares with other schools nationally. The governing body has been thorough in ensuring that all statutory responsibilities are met.
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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	102421
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	400546

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	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sean Sinclair
Headteacher	Helen Andrews
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 February 2010
Telephone number	01895 671960
Fax number	020 88451611
Email address	stswithunwells@hillingdongrid.org

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