

# St Sebastian's RC Primary School

Douglas Green, Salford, Greater Manchester, M6 6ET

**Inspection dates** 23–24 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- This is a very caring and welcoming school. Pupils from a wide range of minority ethnic and other backgrounds are helped to settle quickly and make friends.
- There are very strong and supportive relationships and a positive climate for learning.
- Children make a good and sometimes outstanding start to school, in the creative and stimulating Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils make good progress from their many different starting points and achieve well during their time in school.
- Teaching is nearly always good and sometimes outstanding.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy school and behave well in lessons and when playing outside.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership and a clear vision for improving the school. Senior leaders and governors work well together and share the headteacher's high expectations. This has led to successful improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage and the quality of teaching. As a result, standards are rising.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although the teaching is mostly good, not enough is outstanding. Improvements made to teaching are not yet consistently seen in all lessons.
- Plans drawn up by the school to improve the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils are not always focused closely enough on their impact on pupils' learning. The role of subject leaders in improving pupils' progress is not yet fully developed.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, two of which were joint observations with senior staff. In addition, inspectors visited parts of lessons, scrutinised pupils' work and listened to them read. They also observed children during lunchtimes and at play.
- Discussions were held with staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority. Inspectors also took account of 11 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- Various documents were scrutinised as part of the inspection. These included the school's self-evaluation and school development plan, local authority monitoring reports, notes from monitoring the work that teachers do, behaviour logs and records relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors checked records of pupils' past and current progress and scrutinised records of the pupils who join or leave the school at times other than would be expected.
- Inspectors took account of 7 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and considered findings from questionnaires organised by the school.

## Inspection team

Chris Maloney, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Frank Carruthers

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average size primary school.
- A much higher than average number of pupils joins or leaves the school at other than standard times.
- Just over half of the pupils are White British and other pupils belong to a wide range of minority ethnic and other backgrounds, particularly Black African.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children from service families, is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is high.
- The proportion of pupils whose learning needs are supported at the level known as school action is below average. The proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Some pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes.
- The school offers a breakfast club every morning.

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

- Increase the percentage of outstanding teaching by:
  - ensuring that teachers consistently plan work that is neither too easy nor too hard for all pupils and, in particular, ensuring that the more-able pupils are suitably challenged
  - ensuring that all lessons are taught at a brisk pace and that all pupils learn well throughout the whole lesson
  - ensuring that pupils have a clear understanding of how to improve their work and that the quality of marking consistently matches that of the best.
- Raise attainment and accelerate progress further by:
  - giving pupils more opportunities to use their mathematical skills in solving real-life problems
  - increase the opportunities for subject leaders to ensure that their work has a positive impact on pupils' progress
  - ensuring that all actions planned by senior staff and governors to raise the achievement of pupils are clearly focused and measurable.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are well below those typical for their age, especially in their language. There are increasing numbers of pupils arriving with additional language needs, because English is not the language of their home, and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is rising. The appointment of a new leader to the Early Years Foundation Stage has helped to make improvements to the quality of teaching, the learning environment and the progress children make, especially in their reading and personal development.
- Improvements in teaching across the school have ensured that progress is faster than in previous years and is now consistently good, although more-able pupils are not always making as much progress as they should.
- Most pupils continue to do well in Key Stage 1. After a dip in results in 2010, pupils' progress is now rising faster. As a result, pupils left Year 2 in 2012 with broadly average standards typical for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 rose further in 2012 and pupils' results in national tests were above average in reading and broadly average in writing and mathematics. However, not enough pupils reached the higher levels in mathematics.
- Pupils do well in reading due to good quality teaching of phonics (the regular practising of linking letters and sounds) in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The Year 1 check on pupils' use of phonics showed attainment was well below that seen nationally in 2012. However, this result did not reflect the good progress made by these pupils, many of whom were at the early stages of learning English.
- Pupils become increasingly confident and fluent in their reading due to the systematic development of their reading skills in Key Stage 2. Pupils are keen readers and were eager to tell inspectors about the books they enjoy and the authors they like.
- Pupils' writing develops well through school, especially now that they are being given more opportunities to write for different purposes in a range of subjects.
- In mathematics, although pupils become increasingly secure in calculation and number work, not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to use a challenging combination of these skills in working out real-life problems.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good and sometimes outstanding progress. Pupils attracting the pupil premium funding are making similarly good progress and their attainment is becoming closer to national expectations.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is mainly good and some is outstanding, although there is a small amount that requires improvement.
- The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is much improved and this is why children's progress is so much better. Adults work very hard in settling children quickly so that their individual needs can be supported effectively. There is a good balance of activities between those that children choose for themselves and those led by adults. The indoor and outdoor areas promote children's learning very well, in a creative and stimulating way. Children were particularly interested and excited in using the 'Science Lab' where they dressed in their white coats to do experiments.
- Teachers and support staff know their pupils very well and are quick to give them help whenever problems arise.
- Pupils who are potentially vulnerable because of their circumstances, including disabled pupils, those identified as having special educational needs and the increasing number whose first

language is not English are well-supported. Teachers and teaching assistants show good skills in making sure that pupils understand what they have to do. This reflects the school's very positive approach to ensuring that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed.

- When teaching is most effective teachers use their good subject knowledge and assessment information to make sure that work is set at the right level to challenge groups of pupils of different abilities. The lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and pupils remain interested and well-focused throughout the lesson and learn quickly. Pupils are given precise information, in lessons and through marking, on how to improve their work and time to respond to the advice given. Although these features were often seen, they are not yet consistent in all cases.
- In an outstanding Year 6 lesson pupils really enjoyed working in pairs to solve clues in a variety of number puzzles set at different levels to 'stretch' their abilities. Highly skilled teaching of the use of different ways to tackle the problem and questioning to check on how well they were learning ensured that pupils made rapid progress. The behaviour of the pupils was outstanding because of the creative and stimulating work and the high expectations of the teacher and teaching assistant.

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

- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy learning. A typical pupil comment is, 'Learning is fun. Our school is full of children from all over the world and we all get on.' The very warm and friendly atmosphere and positive climate for learning help pupils to settle quickly and build strong relationships. As a result, pupils are respectful, polite and helpful.
- Their good behaviour and attitudes to learning have contributed well to their improving progress and rising attainment.
- The behaviour of pupils is managed extremely sensitively by adults. Scrutiny of behaviour records shows that there are few incidents of unacceptable behaviour.
- While behaviour in lessons is generally good, some pupils do not always maintain good behaviour for themselves without adult support. When playing outside, a few pupils do not always think about the consequences of their actions without being reminded and their play can be over boisterous.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying may take, including cyber-bullying and bullying as a result of prejudice. Incidents of bullying of any kind are rare. However, when it does happen pupils are confident that it will be dealt with quickly and fairly.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves and others safe. A typical pupil view is, 'Teachers care about us and make sure we are safe'. Older pupils know how to keep safe when using the Internet. Parents say that their children feel safe.
- Pupils enjoy taking the many responsibilities on offer, such as playground buddies, prefects or school councillors. The school is doing a great deal to promote good attendance and its procedures for dealing with absence are very thorough. It is working particularly well with parents in stressing the importance of their children attending school as often as possible. As a result, attendance is getting closer to the national average.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher has had a significant impact on raising achievement and improving the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Her clear and ambitious vision for making the school the best it can be is shared by staff and governors.
- Morale is high and responses to the staff questionnaire reflect that teachers and support staff feel valued and that their professional development is supported.
- Senior leaders work well together and share a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The school's view about its own performance is, therefore, accurate with appropriate areas for development in teaching and pupils' progress. However, the plans produced by the school to improve these areas are not always clear and measurable.
- Teachers are held rigorously to account, through the management of their work. Senior staff

check on the quality of teaching and take actions to follow up on areas for improvement.

- Senior staff keep a close eye on how well pupils are doing, and discuss this with teachers on a regular basis so that all pupils are helped to make the best possible progress.
- Subject leaders are enthusiastic, keen to improve their skills and work hard in their areas of responsibility. However, they do not have enough opportunities to check that their planned improvements are successful in improving the achievement of pupils.
- The curriculum is enriched with art, music, clubs, visits and visitors. It has been successfully developed so that links can be made in learning in different subjects to create exciting and interesting topics like that on African Culture. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Good partnership working with local schools has helped with improvements in the teaching of reading and ways in which pupils can work effectively in groups. The local Education Action Zone has helped the school develop specialist sports coaching. The school is supported effectively by the local authority.
- Rigorous checks are made on all staff and visitors to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school and would recommend it to others.
- The governance of the school:
  - The governing body supports the school well and ensures that all pupils have an equal chance to learn. Governors have a good understanding of how the school's budget is being used. They have carefully allocated pupil premium funding and regularly check that it is benefiting the pupils it should. Governors are well-informed about the work of the school, through regular visits and reports from the school, local authority and external consultants. They know its strengths and areas where further improvements are necessary in teaching and pupils' progress. Governors take an active part in producing and reviewing the school's plans for improvement but do not always ensure that they are sharply focused and measurable. They check on evaluations of teachers' work in order to hold them to account for the achievement of pupils. Governors make sure the school meets national requirements for safeguarding pupils.

## 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>	105963
<b>Local authority</b>	Salford
<b>Inspection number</b>	402995

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	200
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Fr Liam Houlihan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rita Bourke
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 October 2007
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 7366875
<b>Fax number</b>	Not applicable
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