

# St Gerard's RC Junior and Infant School

Yatesbury Avenue, Castle Vale, Birmingham, B35 6LB

**Inspection dates** 24–25 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress across the school. Pupils reach above average standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- There are good relationships between teachers and pupils in lessons which support learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They plan lessons well and explain clearly to pupils what they will be learning in lessons.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Pupils are extremely well behaved and have excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils work very well with each other in lessons. They are very proud of the school and behaviour around the site is excellent. Pupils say they feel very safe in school.
- Leaders, managers and governors 'strive for perfection' and have ensured that teaching and pupils' achievement have improved since the previous inspection.
- Governors have close links with the school and know the school well. Governors with particular areas of expertise successfully support and challenge school staff.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough teaching that is outstanding so pupils make more rapid progress. Teachers do not always ensure work is at precisely the right level so it is not too hard or too easy. They do not always check on learning and adjust their teaching to ensure pupils progress quickly.
- There are not enough opportunities throughout lessons for pupils to review their own and each other's work.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 16 lessons or part-lessons, attended an assembly and listened to a group of pupils read.
- Two observations of lessons were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspection team scrutinised the seven responses to the on-line Parent View survey along with the returns from the school's own parental questionnaire, which most parents had completed.
- Meetings took place with staff, pupils, the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a telephone call was held with a local authority representative.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and scrutinised records of pupils' progress, the school's self-evaluation and development plan, governing body minutes, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding documents.

## Inspection team

Susan Williams, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Raymond Biglin

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are White British with others from a range of backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups, is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action is above average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils.
- The school meets the government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

- Improve teaching so a greater proportion is outstanding and pupils make more rapid progress by ensuring:
  - teachers check on learning in lessons and adapt teaching where necessary so pupils make fast progress
  - work is at precisely the right level for pupils of different abilities so it is not too hard or too easy
  - pupils have more opportunities throughout lessons to review their own and each other's work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress across the school and achieve well. Attainment at Key Stage 2 improved in English and mathematics to be above the levels found nationally in 2012.
- Children enter the school with skills and knowledge well below those expected for their age. The curriculum is well planned to help them learn quickly. For example, in a Reception lesson children were engaged in a wide range of activities on 'insects', a topic they were clearly interested in. Children were able to describe the insects and to talk about how to improve their art work, making very good progress in their learning. Children leave Reception just below the levels expected for their age, which represents good progress from their low starting points.
- Attainment at Key Stage 1 is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2012 a similar proportion of Year 1 pupils achieved the standard for the phonics (the sounds that letters make) check as in other schools.
- Reading is developed well in the school. Children in the Nursery use 'sign language' to help them remember letters. In Key Stage 1 pupils are able to understand the meaning of the words they read and to break up words they find difficult using strategies they have learnt to help them. Pupils enjoy reading and read regularly. Year 6 pupils say they enjoy helping younger pupils with their reading.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are given extra help to support them with their learning in lessons and in small groups. These pupils make good progress throughout the school. The school promotes equality of opportunity for pupils' learning well.
- Pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium receive extra help in small groups to help them catch up. These sessions are based on accurate assessment and are personalised to address gaps in knowledge. These pupils make good progress and attain as well as other pupils in the school above those of pupils nationally.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good and there is some that is outstanding. Strengths of teaching are the clear routines in lessons and the positive relationships between teachers and pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they explain clearly to pupils what lessons are about, linking learning with what pupils have learnt previously.
- Reading, writing and mathematics are all taught effectively in the school. Books are marked regularly with positive comments to help pupils improve their work. Pupils say they know their targets and one said that, 'teachers make lessons interesting and fun'.
- In the best teaching, for example a Year 6 mathematics lesson on percentages, there was a wide range of activities for pupils, sharply matched to different ability levels. The teacher skilfully checked on learning in the lesson, adapting tasks and carefully questioning pupils to ensure they made fast progress.
- Teaching is not outstanding because planning is insufficiently precise. Although teachers prepare different levels of work for pupils in the class, more-able pupils still find some work a little too

easy and less-able pupils find some too hard. There are also occasions where teachers deliver parts of the lesson to the whole class with the same effect. Teachers do not always check on pupils' learning regularly enough and change their teaching if pupils' progress starts to slow.

- In some lessons pupils have opportunities to review their own and each other's work, which means they can then think about what improvements can be made. However, this is not a regular feature of lessons across the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive extra help from teachers and other adults in lessons and in small groups to help them with their work. Adults use questioning well to guide these pupils through tasks and activities helping them to understand their work.

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

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary and they engage well on tasks and activities. They are extremely supportive of each other in lessons and work very well on their own, with a partner or in groups. Pupils say this is always the case and lessons are never spoilt by poor behaviour. They take on a wide range of responsibilities in school including the school council, and Year 6 pupils help younger pupils with their reading.
- Behaviour around the site is excellent. Pupils are very sensible and manage their behaviour admirably. This was the case during indoor break and lunchtime sessions after a week without outdoor play due to the snow. Pupils mix well with each other and with different ages in the lunch hall where they sit together and talk quietly.
- Pupils are extremely respectful and courteous to each other and adults. The school successfully promotes good relations and ensures discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Pupils are very proud of their school and say they enjoy being there. Punctuality is excellent to school and lessons and pupils attend school regularly.
- In a 'Celebration assembly' pupils entered quietly and calmly and behaved outstandingly throughout. They had the opportunity for reflection with a prayer in Spanish. They responded very well to questions and listened attentively. They enjoyed hearing about the house points, rewards for working hard and for excellent attendance.
- Pupils say they feel safe and secure. They know about different types of bullying, for example, cyber bullying and racism. They feel confident that they can talk to staff and they are listened to. They say bullying is not an issue in the school and are very positive about behaviour in school. All parents responding to Parent View and the school's own survey say behaviour is well managed in school. The school's behaviour log shows there have been very few incidents over the last few years and confirms parents' and pupils' views are accurate.

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

- The headteacher ensures that the school does its best for every child. Senior leaders know the school very well and have accurately identified strengths and areas for improvement. School improvement plans are tightly focused, based on key priorities for improvement. This has successfully led to improvements in teaching and achievement since the previous inspection.
- Performance management procedures are very thorough. These are based on the priorities identified for the school as well as specific areas for members of staff. The school uses a range

of evidence including full lesson observations, 'learning walks', pupil progress data and pupils' views to ensure they have a comprehensive view of teaching in the school. Teachers are only paid more if they meet their targets, regularly teach well and their pupils make good progress.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced and topic work supports the development of pupils' basic skills. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities including choir, instrumental tuition, Taekwondo and science. Pupils in Years 2 to 6 have the opportunity to learn Spanish. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported in lessons and assemblies. There is a strong focus on 'others'. Priests and ministers have visited the school to talk about 'service' which helps pupils to understand their place in the world.
- The local authority provides 'light-touch' support to this good school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors know the school very well and some have supported the school by serving on the governing body for over twenty years. The governing body has governors with professional expertise including education, human resources and finance. This enables them to effectively support and challenge staff in the school. Governors know the strengths and areas for development in the school and how well the school compares with others. They have a good understanding of data and know that pupils are making good progress. They have discussed how pupil premium funding should be spent and have reviewed the difference this has made. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching in school. Performance management procedures are very thorough. Following the school self-evaluation process, the headteacher's objectives are set with the support of an external adviser. Other staff have their objectives set following this process. Governors sign off pay recommendations for staff and are involved in recruitment. They receive regular training and new governors have an induction programme to support them in their new role. Governors ensure statutory duties are met including safeguarding.

## 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>	103458
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	402918

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>	225
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Pitt
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Hird
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 May 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 4642613
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