

# St Margaret Mary's RC Primary School Manchester

St Margaret's Road, New Moston, Manchester, M40 0EJ

## Inspection dates

5–6 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
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' progress has improved significantly over the past three years and their attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average and, on occasions, well above. This demonstrates outstanding achievement given children's starting points on entry to the Nursery class. In the outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage, children are already adept at working independently and finding things out for themselves. Across the rest of the school, pupils read and write with confidence and accuracy. In mathematics, they have mastered a range of methods to complement their already impressive calculation skills.
- Teaching is outstanding in all key stages. Teachers plan work and activities in class which get the best out of their pupils. Pupils learn rapidly and with enjoyment. Those who sometimes find the work difficult are supported exceptionally well by the excellent team of support assistants. In all classes, there are excellent relationships between pupils and between pupils and the adults who work with them. Staff are now working hard to ensure that the sharing of good and exemplary classroom practice is further embedded across the school.
- In the words of pupils, 'We are very proud of our school because we always get chances to show what we can do.' Pupils are very keen to learn, behave outstandingly well and feel safe and secure in school. They have the highest regard for their classmates and for their teachers and support assistants. They take on a variety of responsibilities: older pupils help younger ones with their reading and handwriting and also accompany children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to lunch. All parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire believe their children are safe and happy in school.
- The executive headteacher has the highest ambitions for the school. Her outstanding leadership ensures that all staff share her very clear view of how successful the school can be. The impact of procedures to check the quality of teaching and of performance in all areas of school life shows that the well-being of each individual pupil is central to the school's work. It recognises, for example, that pupils do not always have enough opportunities to use new technology as an aid to learning. Governors support the school outstandingly well but also hold it to account with the utmost rigour.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons or part-lessons and most teachers were visited twice in their classrooms. In addition, inspectors heard pupils in Years 2 and 6 read.
- They held meetings with two groups of pupils, including members of the school council, and the Chair of the Governing Body. They also had discussions with a representative of the local authority, senior staff, phase leaders, subject coordinators, support and administrative staff. They also spoke informally with parents in the hall before school assembly.
- Inspectors took account of the 18 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and of the 16 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and considered a range of documentation, including internal and external pupil progress and attainment data, pupils' work in English and mathematics, school improvement planning and the school's procedures to enable it to gain an accurate view of its performance. In addition, they looked at minutes of governing body meetings, reports written on behalf of the local authority and documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

James Kidd, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Deane

Additional Inspector

Juliet Demster

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger than average sized primary school. Pupil numbers have increased by almost 20% since the previous inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families, or looked after by the local authority, is broadly average.
- The majority of pupils are White British and there are few pupils with English as an additional language.
- The percentage of pupils supported at school action is below average; the percentage supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below that usually found.
- The school holds The Manchester Healthy Schools award and also the Artsmark. It is an active member of the Manchester University Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) initiative, which is designed to promote pupils' personal development and self-esteem. The school also runs a breakfast club, which provides before-school support activities for pupils who sometimes find the work difficult.
- There have been several staff changes since the previous inspection and a new leadership structure, including phase leaders, has been introduced. The executive headteacher, who is also headteacher of another local school, remains in post.

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

- Maintain the high quality of teaching and learning by:
  - giving pupils more opportunities to use new technology as a learning tool
  - continuing to embed the sharing of good and exemplary classroom practice across the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- Achievement is outstanding. Children's skills on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage vary from year to year, but are generally below the expectations for their age. They make outstanding progress, personally and academically, in both Nursery and Reception classes and by the time they enter Year 1, they are used to finding things out for themselves and taking responsibility for their own learning.
- This outstanding progress of all groups of pupils continues across the rest of the school and attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average and, for significant numbers of pupils, well above that usually seen. Parents are unanimously satisfied with the progress their children are making.
- Children in Nursery and Reception classes and pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 enjoy learning. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, for example, children recognise 'tricky' words accurately during their letters and sounds sessions and pronounce them correctly. In Years 1 and 2, they give convincing information on the characteristics of tyrannosaurus rex and use technical vocabulary, such as 'habitat' to explain how these dinosaurs lived.
- In Years 3 and 4, pupils work cooperatively in pairs to sort lists of words into different sounds and to create their own mathematical problems. Pupils in Year 4 demonstrate that they understand and use a range of scientific vocabulary, 'matter', 'solids' and 'gases', for example, accurately and in context. In Year 5, pupils use a variety of methods to solve increasingly different mathematical problems and also produce stories in which tension is created to capture the interest of the reader. By Year 6, pupils see clearly the different patterns and links in mathematics and the quality of their writing and grammatical accuracy belies their years. In both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, pupils read confidently and with understanding.
- The school uses pupil premium funding very well indeed, to provide additional support during 'booster' sessions at the breakfast club and during the day. The impact of this spending is outstanding and pupils known to be eligible to free school meals make the same outstanding progress as other pupils in the school and reach above average standards, particularly in reading and mathematics. As a result of the wide range of one-to-one and small group sessions delivered by highly-committed support assistants, the progress of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is equally outstanding.

### The quality of teaching

### is outstanding

- Pupils speak highly of their teachers and teaching assistants and say, 'They make difficult work fun and give us things to do which make us think!' Indeed, the quality of teaching is outstanding in all key stages. It is characterised by excellent relationships in the classroom, high expectations of what pupils can do and teachers' excellent use of information on how well pupils have learned to help them plan future lessons.
- Teachers and teaching assistants ask pupils very searching questions to get them to think more deeply about the topics they are studying and even encourage them to set themselves challenges. From the moment pupils enter the classroom, the learning begins, often at a rapid pace, and there are regular checks to make sure that everyone is keeping up. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, for example, there was a buzz of excitement and pupils enjoyed working in groups and supporting each other with their learning. Lessons comprise an on-going dialogue between pupils and between pupils and the adults working with them.
- Pupils who sometimes find the work difficult benefit from very well-focused support from both teachers and teaching assistants and activities which are exactly what they need to make progress. As a result, they are able to make impressive contributions to whole-class discussion and are very often surprised at what they can do.

- Pupils do not just rely on teachers to help them learn. They take the initiative to find things out for themselves. As pupils comment, 'We are always using a dictionary and thesaurus to find out the meaning of difficult words and also to help us spell them correctly!'
- As a result of detailed marking, which tells pupils how well they are doing and which gives them accurate advice on how they can improve their work, pupils are fully aware of the National Curriculum levels and sub-levels at which they are working. They know exactly what they need to do to reach the next level. They also value the many opportunities they have to gauge their own progress and also the progress of their classroom partners.

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

- When asked whether they feel safe in school, pupils answer, 'Definitely! Our teachers are kind and look after us and our friends support us too.' Indeed, pupils have an excellent awareness of how to keep themselves safe in school and also outside its walls. For example, they talk confidently about the dangers of using the internet.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and that it is dealt with very quickly by the staff if it occurs. The anti-bullying weeks teach them about different kinds of bullying and they have an excellent awareness of the many forms it can take.
- Behaviour in lessons and around school is outstanding. Pupils are exceptionally well mannered and show the utmost courtesy towards staff, pupils and visitors. They are kind and thoughtful and are proud of their own achievements and of the achievements of their classmates. Older pupils support younger ones with reading and writing and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are often accompanied to lunch by pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- The school's involvement in the PATHS project continues to have a most positive impact on pupils' confidence and self-esteem. In a mixed Year 3/4 PATHS lesson, for example, pupils considered how to solve problems in a group situation. They demonstrated exactly what they need to do to keep control of themselves if they are angry or upset.
- The impact of this project was also evident in a Year 5 lesson, when, pupils asked the inspector to look at the books of some of their classmates because, in their words, 'They are really good at maths and English and their books are so neat!'
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development outstandingly well. School councillors are proud to represent their constituents and always have ideas about how the school can be improved. Pupils support a range of charities, have an excellent understanding of right and wrong and take part in a variety of cultural activities, including regular drama and musical productions. With the minimum of direction from staff, they lead assemblies with skill and verve and the Year 5 assembly during the inspection on 'inspirational people' was a joy to attend. The school is racially harmonious and mutual respect abounds.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- Inspirational leadership from the executive headteacher, who is supported to the full by the most talented and committed deputy headteacher and senior team, has ensured that there has been marked improvement in all areas of school life since the previous inspection. Without doubt, St Margaret Mary's is a school which meets the needs of all of its pupils exceptionally well. Parents believe that leadership is excellent and comment, 'Staff are approachable and always make time for us.'
- Leaders at all levels, including subject coordinators and phase leaders show great determination in driving the school forward. They take the initiative in developing the areas for which they are responsible and offer full support to their colleagues. They believe that performance management arrangements are fair and they take part in joint training sessions with local schools. In their words, 'We feel valued by the senior leadership of our school.'
- The curriculum has been continuously under review since the previous inspection and it now meets the needs and interests of the pupils very closely indeed. Pupils benefit from studying a range of themes, 'Africa', 'healthy eating' and 'Victorian Times', for example, which also emphasise the important skills which are unique to each different subject. Pupils' views are taken fully into account when planning topics and there is also a wide variety of after-school

clubs and educational visits.

- The school promotes equality of opportunity for all exceptionally well. Child protection and safeguarding policies and practice fully meet current requirements and there is zero tolerance for all forms of discrimination.
- The school has an accurate understanding of its performance and recognises, for example, that the further embedding of the sharing of good classroom practice is vital if the high quality of teaching and learning are to be maintained. Leaders are also aware that pupils do not always have enough opportunities to use new technology to support their learning.
- The local authority has supported the school strongly for several years and has been particularly helpful in giving advice about how staffing and leadership can be restructured effectively.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors provide outstanding support for the school and rigorous challenge to its leadership. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They oversee the use of pupil premium funding and monitor the impact of this spending very closely indeed. In addition, they are actively involved in the school's work to improve the quality of teaching and learning; they also ensure that performance management arrangements are secure and that they reward teachers for meeting and often exceeding their classroom targets.

## 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>	105533
<b>Local authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	400050

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>	327
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Angela Ager
<b>Headteacher</b>	Margaret Cunningham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 November 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 681 1504
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