

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Horsforth

Broadgate Lane, Horsforth, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS18 5AB

Inspection dates

6–7 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Since the last inspection there has been a drive to improve leadership at all levels and the impact of this can now be seen in all aspects of the school's work. Strong leadership has been the key to improvements that have been made in teaching and in raising standards. All members of the school community have the highest of aspirations for its pupils and there is a relentless focus on both personal and educational development.
- Teaching is of a consistently high standard throughout the school. Teachers from Reception to Year 6 use their detailed knowledge of individual pupil's abilities to plan activities and resources which challenge and excite them.
- Governors know the school well. They provide high levels of challenge and support to leaders at all levels and contribute effectively to school improvement.
- There is a strong sense of community and parents, pupils, staff and governors all feel supported and valued.
- Many children start school with skills that are below what is typical for their age. Overall, throughout the school, they make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics and attainment at the end of Year 6 has been very high for several years.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well because skilled support and guidance is tailored to their particular needs.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are proud of their school, enjoy attending and their attitudes to learning are extremely positive. Children feel safe and cared for and are respectful to all. They value the opportunities provided to them both in the classroom and through a wide range of enrichment activities.
- Children in the Reception class quickly learn how to socialise. They demonstrate strong cooperation and an interest in developing their skills. They enjoy coming to school because learning is fun.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons, all teachers were observed at least once and two observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with school staff, groups of pupils, a small group of governors, a representative of the local authority and several individual and groups of parents. Inspectors also spoke informally to many pupils and talked to teachers about their lessons.
- They listened to pupils reading during their lessons and observed small groups of pupils who were receiving additional support to assist them with their learning.
- Inspectors analysed a number of documents including: the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation summary; minutes of governing body meetings; records of visits by the local authority school improvement adviser; data on pupils' current progress; records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding and teachers' planning.
- Pupils' books were looked at with particular attention being paid to pupils' writing and progress, as well as the quality of teachers' marking.
- Information published on the school's website was also taken into consideration, as were the responses from 68 parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Helen Gaunt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fiona McNally

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of boys and girls differs between year groups.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding (which is provided by the government to support the learning of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, in the care of the local authority or the children of forces families) is much lower than average. There have been only one or two pupils each year who fall into this category.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who come from ethnic minority backgrounds is very low in comparison with most schools. There are only a few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average. The proportion supported at school action is below average.
- The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school holds the following awards: The Stephen Lawrence Awards 1 & 2; The Healthy Schools Award; Activemark; The School Achievement Award; Investors in Pupils Award and The Leeds Inclusion Chartermark.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further increase the rate of progress made by all pupils by:
 - improving their spelling skills
 - ensuring teachers routinely check that pupils act on the advice and guidance they are given, which tells them what they should do to improve.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- The majority of children start school with skills that are either below average or typical for their age. They are happy in Reception, make good progress and enter Year 1 well equipped to manage all aspects of their learning.
- Children continue to make good progress during their time in Key Stage 1 as a result of the high quality of teaching they experience and standards at the end of Year 2 are well above average in all subjects.
- The progress made by pupils throughout Years 3 to 6 is rapid and standards in English and mathematics are consistently very high by the time they leave the school. The proportion of pupils making better than average progress in Key Stage 2 is much higher than most schools. There are no differences between the rates of progress made by any pupils, irrespective of background, ability or gender.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs matches the excellent progress made by their classmates. This is because the care and support they receive is well matched to their particular needs.
- Pupils demonstrate good knowledge of letters and the sounds they make. They are taught this aspect of reading well. Pupils read a wide variety of text, in books and on computers, across all subjects. They are enthusiastic, confident readers as a result of being encouraged to read at every opportunity. This also supports their progress in other subjects.
- There are very few pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium at St Mary's. They are usually those known to be eligible for free school meals and any additional funding is used to increase staffing, providing extra support and enable these pupils to make good progress in line with their peers. The extra support provided to these pupils means that they reach standards that are similar to others in the school.
- Pupils' writing skills are well developed from an early age. This ensures that they can get their ideas down on paper and supports their learning in other subjects. Spelling is not as strong as other aspects of pupils' writing.
- In mathematics, pupils are encouraged to use their knowledge to solve problems. This helps them to develop research and teamwork skills.
- Outstanding learning takes place when pupils work together in pairs or groups, sharing their ideas, and many examples of this were seen during the inspection.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Senior and middle leaders are constantly focused on improving the quality of teaching. Expectations are high and teachers' work and its effect on pupils' progress is frequently checked. Teaching is consistently strong throughout the school from Reception to Year 6.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and high expectations. They are enthusiastic and caring and, through effective questioning and observation during lessons, they take every opportunity to check pupils' understanding.
- Teaching is effective because teachers use their detailed knowledge of individual pupils to match work and activities to meet their particular needs and interests. Adults provide on-going support and guidance throughout lessons.
- Typical lessons are well planned. Teachers explain clearly to pupils what they are expected to learn in each lesson. Pupils are encouraged to discuss how well they are doing, what they have learned and what they found difficult. Tasks are varied and pupils are used to working individually, in pairs and in 'collaborative learning groups', which are different for every subject. Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. They are used to following instructions as well as being capable of learning on their own.

- Outstanding learning was seen in a Year 5 lesson in which pupils were developing their literacy skills while describing a character from a book using similes and metaphors. The teacher captured their interest by involving them in various activities including, "Hot Seating", research using computers, group discussion, presenting to the rest of the class and creative writing. At one point, the teacher gave different activities to each group. The atmosphere in the room was one of excitement and purpose. All pupils made excellent progress and had a huge amount of fun in the process.
- Additional targeted help and support is provided for any child who might benefit from or need it. This includes disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs, pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding, pupils who speak English as an additional language or those whose progress may not be quite as fast as it should be. Such support may be within the normal classroom environment, where highly skilled teaching assistants work successfully alongside teachers, or in a small group or one-to-one situation. Regular and accurate checking of progress enables teachers to check and modify this support to make sure it is always having the desired effect.
- Teachers have responded well to the key issues raised at the previous inspection and books are mostly well marked. Pupils make notes about their learning, commenting upon what they have enjoyed and what they think they could do better. They are also encouraged to comment on the quality of their partner's work and to discuss how it could be improved. Teachers provide guidance to pupils on aspects of their learning which could be improved but do not always check that pupils have acted on this advice. Teachers do not routinely check pupils' spelling.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' say they love coming to school because, "Everyone cares for each other, we have lots of friends and we love our teachers". This is exemplified in their excellent behaviour, positive attitudes towards their learning and high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Pupils show respect for each other and for adults, are confident, friendly, polite and considerate. They are very proud of their school.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They understand all of the different forms of bullying, say that bullying rarely happens and when it does it is dealt with quickly.
- Teachers apply the school's positive behaviour policy consistently. Pupils know exactly what is expected of them, which they start to learn as soon as they enter Reception. They are keen to do well and enjoy the recognition and rewards they receive. These include, house points, attendance certificates, headteacher awards and letters home.
- Pupils take on responsibilities, for example school council, helping teachers, acting as mentors and buddies to younger children and contributing to the decisions made by leaders. They feel appreciated by adults for the contributions they make. Pupils helped to formulate the behaviour policy.
- The school recognises and celebrates different cultures and religions through assemblies and in the normal curriculum. Topic work includes consideration of Judaism, Christianity, Second World War, and Ancient Egypt. The school has two Stephen Lawrence Awards. There have been no reported incidents of racism since 2011.
- The results of the online questionnaire, Parent View, and conversations with parents which took place during the inspection, show that parents are extremely satisfied with the school. A small proportion say they think the school does not always respond to parental concerns quickly enough, but inspectors found no evidence to support this.
- There is a strong community spirit at St Mary's and parents, pupils, staff and governors all say they feel part of it. One parent told inspectors of the immense support her family had received during what had been a very difficult time for them.
- At breaks and lunchtimes children play harmoniously together. There is ample supervision but children can also be trusted to adhere to the guidelines.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- A strong sense of shared purpose and hard work from all staff and governors, coupled with excellent leadership from the headteacher, have driven improvements since the last inspection. Key areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been addressed and there is now outstanding leadership throughout the school.
- There have been excellent improvements in the way that pupils' progress is tracked which ensures that all pupils are supported and challenged to do as well as they can. All aspects of the school's work are checked and measured against the progress pupils make.
- Improvements in the quality and consistency of teaching have led to higher standards of attainment and increasing rates of progress for pupils. Previously high standards of behaviour and high levels of pupil attendance have been maintained.
- The school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance are rigorous and accurate. Leaders know their school well. Resources are well targeted to areas in need of improvement and progress is regularly reviewed. Leaders redirect additional resources as and when improvements are made.
- For example, development of the outdoor space has improved the learning environment for children in the Reception year.
- There are rigorous systems in place to check teachers' performance; teachers are set ambitious targets related to pupil progress, school priorities, their professional needs and leadership roles. Teaching and learning is regularly observed and feedback is provided to teachers to help them develop their practice.
- There are many opportunities for teachers to develop through partnerships (for example the Horsforth Cluster), training courses and sharing the good practice that exists within the school.
- Equality of opportunity is central to the work of the school. Leaders are focused on ensuring that all pupils who may face barriers to learning, do as well as they can and are not discriminated against.
- The curriculum is exciting and varied, underpins pupils' high levels of achievement and enjoyment and contributes to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; all aspects of which are strongly promoted. There are a number of opportunities for pupils beyond the classroom. These include after school clubs and residential.
- The school receives light touch support from the local authority.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have high aspirations for, and a strong sense of commitment towards, the school. They have a very clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The range of skills held by members of the governing body is such that all aspects of the school's work come under close scrutiny while at the same time receiving excellent support. A high priority is placed on the training and development of all members of the governing body. It uses information about the progress pupils make and about the quality of teaching as a basis for making judgements about teachers' salary progression. The governing body ensures that all safeguarding requirements are met and its members have a clear understanding of how the budget is used. They also check the effect that the pupil premium funding has on the progress made by those pupils eligible to receive it.

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	108013
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	403055

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joe McDonnell
Headteacher	Peter Hughes
Date of previous school inspection	31 October 2007
Telephone number	0113 2584593
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