

St Mary's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy

Grammar School Road, Brigg, Lincolnshire, DN20 8BB

Inspection dates 6–7 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- The school provides an extremely caring environment where pupils feel safe and are greatly valued as individuals.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points, and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good because the high quality relationships between adults and pupils strongly enhance pupils' desire to learn; and teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils have remarkably positive attitudes to learning, and they get on extremely well together. They are able to reflect very carefully on their own behaviour and show great sensitivity to the needs of others. They respond extremely well to the positive role models provided by staff.
- Leadership and management are good. Effective action by the headteacher, staff and governors has improved teaching and raised achievement. A rigorous system to analyse the progress of different groups of pupils is enabling the school to further accelerate rates of learning in English and mathematics.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Despite significant strengths in teaching, a few weaknesses in some lessons prevent teaching from being outstanding overall, and progress from being consistently rapid.
- The school's development plan does not state clearly enough the proportion of pupils who are required to make better-than-expected progress in order for pupil achievement to become outstanding.
- Teachers responsible for leading English and mathematics have insufficient opportunity to observe teaching and learning in these subjects, to share the effective practice found, and to remedy the remaining weaknesses that prevent teaching and learning from being outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with staff, pupils and governors, and the lead inspector spoke by telephone to a representative of the local authority who supports improvement.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the school's self-evaluation; the school's improvement plan; information about current standards and progress; records of the monitoring of teaching; the work pupils were doing in their books; and the school's documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Teaching and learning were observed in nine lessons or part-lessons, across all year groups. Seven teachers were seen teaching.
- Inspectors met parents informally at the start of the school day to gather their views of the school and took account of the 41 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View). Comments provided by parents directly to the lead inspector and by telephone messages contributed to inspection evidence.
- Inspectors analysed the 26 questionnaires completed by school staff.

Inspection team

David Matthews, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Harrison

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mary's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 April 2012. When its predecessor school, St Mary's Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- It is a smaller than average sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- A well below average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from families in the armed forces and for those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school met the government's current floor standards that set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The before and after-school care, provided on the school's premises, is subject to separate inspection arrangements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move teaching from good to outstanding and thereby further improve pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring pupils of all ability are consistently well challenged in their learning, reshaping lessons as they move along, so as to better challenge individuals when necessary
 - giving pupils more opportunities for independent learning, while retaining teacher talk where necessary
 - providing written comments that precisely tell individual pupils exactly what to do next to improve their work, and ensuring pupils respond
 - ensuring children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not acquire misconceptions when learning about letters and sounds to help them read unfamiliar words.
- Strengthen the good leadership and management by:
 - including in the school's development plan, the specific proportion of pupils required to make better than average progress, and diligently monitoring the impact of this expectation
 - ensuring that the English and mathematics leaders are able to undertake a rigorous programme of monitoring teaching and learning through the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start school with skills that are typically expected for their age. They do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and most start Year 1 with average or above average skills for their age. They make notably good progress in developing dispositions and attitudes and in their physical development, often choosing to move vigorously in the improved outdoor area. However, knowledge of letters and sounds, to help them read unfamiliar words, does not always progress as rapidly as it might.
- Pupils' work, their learning in lessons, and information about their progress indicate that progress is good. Almost all pupils of all ability make at least the progress expected of them in Years 1 to 6 and a substantial proportion make good progress.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average by the end of Year 6, a good proportion of pupils having reached above average levels in reading and mathematics in national tests in 2012.
- Not enough pupils, however, make consistently rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics for progress to be outstanding overall. This is because they are not always given work that challenges them to do their best. When this happens it typically applies to the average and the more-able pupils, but by no means exclusively so.
- There are no significant differences in the progress of the various groups of pupils in the school because the school's priority to provide equality of opportunity for all pupils is matched by effective support based on very careful monitoring of the progress of these groups.
- Pupils with special educational needs do as well as other pupils because of the good support they are given in lessons. Compared to all other pupils in the school, pupils supported through the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make equally good progress in English and mathematics as others in the school, as shown in the 2012 assessments of their progress. Their attainment is better than this group of pupils nationally.
- Most pupils read widely and develop an enjoyment of books by, for example, dressing up as a character from a favourite book on World Book Day. The good understanding they develop in literacy and mathematics prepares them well for the next stage of their education.

The quality of teaching is good

- The strengths in teaching, some of which are outstanding, far outweigh the relative weaknesses.
- Throughout the school, adults develop and sustain excellent relationships with pupils so that they feel valued and are keen to do well. As a result there is an extremely positive climate for learning.
- Brisk pace is a feature of most lessons. There are good levels of engagement in the Early Years Foundation Stage where children have a range of captivating learning opportunities inside and out, including the 'hospital' where children say they 'check heart beeps'. The teaching about letters and sounds to help children with their reading is largely effective, although opportunities are sometimes missed to correct misconceptions about the sounds associated with some letters. Whole-class guitar lessons highly motivate pupils in Key Stage 2 and promote good learning in music.
- Teachers generally have high expectations of what they want pupils to achieve and they carefully plan lessons to meet the needs of pupils of differing ability. This planning is mainly successful in challenging pupils and promoting good progress. However, where progress is good rather than rapid, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to demand more of individuals who are not challenged to the full by tasks such as repeating mathematical calculations when they are already competent with them.
- Effective teaching strategies in Key Stage 1 include the skilful linking of learning letter sounds with writing so that learning is meaningful. Teachers systematically build pupils' skills in

mathematics.

- Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach including mathematics, English and music, and this helps them to give pupils clear explanations and promotes good learning. They mostly make good use of the time they spend talking to pupils, and impart knowledge effectively. Occasionally teachers talk for too long, this limits opportunities for pupils' independent learning so that their understanding and skills are not always developed to the full, for example, through mathematical problem-solving.
- Teachers mark pupils work regularly and provide ample reassurance and encouragement. Where marking is good rather than outstanding it fails to be specific about what precisely individuals need to do next to make their work even better.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils very keenly follow the examples of the adults in school who act as exemplary role models. As a result, they are extremely sensitive to the needs of others, and generally show high levels of care and consideration towards them. They are remarkably capable of reflecting on their behaviour and have a well-defined sense of right and wrong.
- Parents, staff and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about behaviour and say that, 'staff expertly manage it' dealing quickly and effectively with any very rare incidents of bullying. School records show that the isolated incidents of less-than-outstanding behaviour are minor ones.
- Pupils say that they feel safe, and parents responding to Ofsted's online questionnaire, and when talking to inspectors, unanimously supported this feeling.
- In lessons, pupils are very keen to learn and work extremely cooperatively with one another when given the chance to do so. They show great respect to teachers and to others in and around the school, in their polite, well-mannered dealings.
- Attendance is above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has the wholehearted support of staff and governors in promoting an extremely caring setting that reflects the school's Catholic nature, and in effectively setting high standards of behaviour. Parents hold the school in high regard, saying, typically, 'The children are happy, make good progress and the school develops them into rounded young people with good values.' Numerous parents travel some distance to enable their children to attend this school.
- All staff and governors are passionate about wanting the school to be as good as it can be and continue to take full advantage of the support available through the local authority, including that for the professional development of senior leaders.
- The school's comprehensive, detailed development plan clearly specifies its priorities for improvement and provides a useful tool to help the school to move forward. It refers, at times, to the aim for pupils to make better progress than is typical nationally. However, such references are too infrequent, and do not specify the proportion of pupils required to make this accelerated progress. This omission limits the rigour with which the school can measure its success in accelerating learning.
- Senior leaders have a good impact on the school's development and underpin its good capacity to improve further. They led the school's most recent evaluation of itself, which was accurate and realistic. They have an extremely clear view of why the school is not yet outstanding.
- A significant innovation is the introduction of a rigorous system of checking pupils' progress that allows the school to carefully analyse how well different groups of pupils are doing. This valuable information provides a clear picture of the progress of pupils receiving the pupil premium, pupils identified with special educational needs and all other groups.
- English and mathematics leaders have a good impact on teaching, for example, by helping staff

to agree about pupils' attainment. However, the infrequency with which they are able to observe teaching and learning through the school, and so further promote its effectiveness, prevents their impact from being outstanding.

■ The school curriculum is enriched by music, with exciting opportunities to play guitar and to reach high standards in singing, with the choir setting exemplary standards. There is good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development. Provision for spiritual development is outstanding.

■ Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

– Governors keep a close eye on finances. They seek good value for money and hold the school to account for how finances are spent. They ask questions about the impact of spending on the learning of groups of pupils, including those entitled to the pupil premium, and so evaluate the impact of teaching and the overall performance of the school. They are fully aware of how effectively teachers' performance is managed, how any underperformance is tackled and the extent to which teachers' pay reflects their responsibilities, and their effectiveness.

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	138015
Local authority	North Lincolnshire
Inspection number	403724

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gillian Smith
Headteacher	Anthony Norton
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01652 653355
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