

St Maxentius CofE Primary School

New Heys Way, Bradshaw, Bolton, Lancashire, BL2 4AE

Inspection dates

14–15 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Pupils make good progress overall and achieve well. Since the last inspection, progress has improved.
- By the end of Year 6, standards are well above average in English and mathematics.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Teaching is good overall with some examples of outstanding teaching, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teachers plan lessons well and make sure that the work they give pupils helps them to do their best.
- Pupils show good attitudes in their lessons and behave well at playtimes and lunchtimes. They are polite and friendly.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe. Almost all parents agree.
- Attendance is above average.
- As a result of the strong and determined leadership of the headteacher, senior leaders and governors, the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Consequently, pupils are now making better progress.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well and flows through all aspects of the school's work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching, although good and occasionally outstanding, is not yet ensuring that pupils make the best possible progress. As a result, achievement is not yet outstanding.
- In some classes, pupils make better progress in reading and mathematics than in writing. This is because teachers' marking in writing is not precise enough and pupils are not always given enough time to respond.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons taught by eight teachers. Two of these lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Inspectors heard pupils from Year 2 and Year 4 read.
- Inspectors held meetings and discussions with pupils from Year 2 and Year 6, the headteacher, members of the school’s leadership team and three members of the governing body. The lead inspector spoke to a representative from the local authority by telephone.
- Inspectors received six letters from parents. A further three parents left messages for the inspectors. The inspectors formally met with four parents during the inspection and took account of the views of 85 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of documents including the school’s view of its’ own performance, data on pupils’ attainment and progress, the school’s improvement plan, monitoring records, performance management information, records relating to behaviour and safeguarding and pupils’ books.

Inspection team

Mark Randall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Alan Parkinson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a slightly smaller-than-average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in local authority care and those with a parent in the armed services) is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is at least consistently good and increase the amount of outstanding teaching to raise achievement further by:
 - sharing best practice evident within the school regularly with all teachers
 - making sure that teachers check the progress of pupils more accurately when they are working independently and intervene sooner to help pupils make the most rapid progress they can
 - making sure that teachers' marking in writing always precisely shows pupils how to improve their work and checking that pupils respond to this effectively.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' achievement is good and has improved since the last inspection. There is no difference between the achievement of different groups of pupils within the school.
- Most children start school with skills that are overall slightly above those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of the good and sometimes outstanding teaching they receive, as well as the wide range of activities indoors and outdoors provided for them. Many pupils start Year 1 with skills above average for their age.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils continue to make good progress. This is confirmed by pupils' work and the school's own information about pupils' progress. In 2012, the proportion of pupils making and exceeding the amount of progress expected of them in English and mathematics was better than that found nationally and has improved. Consequently, standards in English and mathematics are now significantly above average when pupils leave Year 6.
- Following a dip in standards and rates of progress in English and mathematics in 2011, school leaders have taken swift and effective action to improve the quality of teaching across the school. This is now resulting in pupils making better progress and more pupils attaining higher levels.
- Pupils read well. The teaching of phonics (knowledge of letters and sounds to help pupils read unfamiliar words) is good and pupils learn to read quickly. Pupils in Key Stage 1 talk enthusiastically about the features of fiction and non-fiction books and describe their favourite books. Older pupils enjoy reading a wide range of books chosen from the well-stocked library. In a reading session observed in Year 4, pupils made good progress and used inference and deduction well. One pupil talked avidly about an extract he was reading on the Taj Mahal.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics because they are increasingly using their knowledge and understanding to solve problems. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils worked together to solve problems involving the area of shapes. Pupils say that they enjoy mathematics and the work helps them to do their best.
- In some lessons, pupils do not make as much progress in writing as they do in reading and mathematics. This is because teachers do not stop pupils soon enough during their independent work to check their progress and remind them how to improve. Marking of pupils' work in writing is sometimes not precise enough and pupils are not consistently encouraged to respond to teachers' comments.
- Pupils who are supported at school action, school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs also make good progress from their starting points. This is because the school helps them by providing extra adult support in classes and using specialist teachers to good effect. Leaders regularly check the progress that these pupils make.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding also make good progress. In the 2012 national tests, their attainment in average points scores was lower than their peers', although they are now making similar progress to their classmates. The pupil premium funding is being used effectively to provide extra adult support and one-to-one tuition for these pupils. Gaps between how these pupils are doing compared with similar pupils across the country are narrowing, especially in writing and mathematics.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well and ensures that all pupils make good progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is now good overall with some examples of outstanding teaching. However, a small amount of teaching requiring improvement remains. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons well. In most lessons, teachers plan a

range of interesting activities and give pupils work that helps them to do their best. Pupils are provided with a variety of resources to support their learning and use 'working walls' to help them with their work.

- In the best lessons, pupils work well together and share ideas with one another. They are given the opportunity to check their own and one another's work using 'marking ladders'. As a result, pupils are interested, keen to learn and know exactly how to improve their work. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils worked together to find good examples of words to join sentences in their writing and suggested other joining words they could use to improve their work further.
- Teachers are supported well by skilled teaching assistants who move around the classroom, checking pupils' progress throughout lessons and challenging them to do their best. This ensures that all pupils make good progress in their learning. Not all teachers regularly check that pupils remain focused or remind them of how they could improve their work. This slows the progress of some pupils.
- Most of teachers' marking and feedback in English and mathematics are good. Pupils are praised for their efforts and given guidance on how to improve their work. However, occasionally, this guidance is not precise enough in writing and pupils are not given enough time to respond to teachers' comments. This is a missed opportunity for pupils to improve their work.
- Children are taught well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Exciting and imaginative activities are planned for the children, both indoors and outdoors, linked to current learning. In a lesson observed in the Reception class, pupils enthusiastically joined in retelling a story about a bear hunt and then proceeded to draw pictures of the bear, suggest words to describe the bear and built a cave outside to reflect parts of the story.
- Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons and that they are interesting and fun. They say that teachers explain things in different ways to help them to understand. Pupils enjoy using their skills in other subjects; for example, Year 6 pupils, who had been writing flashbacks in their English work, wrote flashbacks to their early childhood as part of Mother's Day cards.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Pupils are happy and enjoy school. They show good attitudes to their learning and behave well in lessons because they are always engaged in learning. They are polite and courteous towards one another and visitors.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. The vast majority of parents agree with this. Pupils have a good understanding of bullying, describing it as 'constant and a power difference'. They say that bullying is very rare, and dealt with effectively by staff. Pupils say that teachers 'always understand their problems and help'.
- At playtimes, pupils of all ages mix and play well together. They are well supervised by staff. Older pupils sort out disagreements and problems on the playground.
- Pupils enjoy taking on a range of roles in school. Some pupils act as librarians or as members of the school's eco-council, school council or the fair trade group.
- Pupils attend school regularly and attendance is above average. Pupils arrive at school on time.
- The school ensures that pupils have a good understanding of keeping themselves safe. Pupils talk confidently about e-safety and understand the risks associated with talking to strangers.

The leadership and management

are good

- The headteacher is very ambitious for the school and has a clear view of how successful it can be. Through her rigorous evaluation, she has clearly identified what the school does well and what it needs to focus on next. Her extensive analysis of data and tightened systems to track pupils' progress mean that underachievement is now quickly identified and addressed. Her determination to drive improvement since the last inspection has been pivotal in moving the

school from satisfactory to good.

- The headteacher and governors have established a culture of high expectations for staff and pupils. Staff morale is high. One staff member commented that 'there is a strong commitment to constantly improving standards and ensuring pupils achieve their potential.'
- Since the last inspection, there has been a relentless focus on improving teaching. Senior leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and set clear areas for improvement for teachers. Senior leaders are good role models and offer coaching and support to less-experienced members of staff. However, teachers are not yet given the opportunity to observe one another regularly as part of their training and development, and this means that opportunities to share best practice in teaching are missed.
- Performance management procedures are robust and linked to teachers' progression up the pay scale.
- The role of subject leaders is well developed. They have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and are fully involved in checking aspects of the school's work. Middle leaders regularly report on the impact of their work to the governing body.
- Safeguarding requirements are met. All staff have been appropriately trained and their eligibility to work with children checked.
- The interesting curriculum is well planned and enhanced by a range of visitors and visits. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their visits to the pantomime, Skipton Castle and the Science and Technology Museum. Displays around school show a range of pupils' work in all subjects.
- The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils develop a deep understanding of Christian values and the beliefs and values of people of other faiths and cultures through inspirational collective worship.
- Although the majority of parents feel that the school is well led and managed, some parents disagree and express concerns over the number of staff leaving the school in recent years. Evidence gathered by inspectors shows that school leaders have addressed inconsistencies in the quality of teaching since the last inspection and consequently teaching has improved.
- The local authority has provided effective support to the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well and are fully involved in all aspects of its work. They visit the school regularly and are linked to classes and subject areas. Governors have an overview of how well pupils are doing compared to pupils nationally and are aware of the attainment and progress of pupils within the school. Governors talk about the quality of teaching and describe how leaders are continuing to improve this. The introduction of 'strategic meetings' has given governors more opportunities to offer challenge and support to the headteacher and other leaders. Governors monitor the school's spending regularly and ensure that the pupil premium is spent well to meet the needs of eligible pupils. They also ensure that safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

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	105231
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	404977

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	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Thomas
Headteacher	Clare Bennett
Date of previous school inspection	30 March 2011
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