

St Mary's Catholic Primary and Nursery School

East Anglian Way, Gorleston, Great Yarmouth, NR31 6QY

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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children in the Nursery make an outstanding start to their education.
- Pupils in the rest of the school make good progress and achieve well. Many disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make excellent progress.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good. Activities are well matched to pupils' learning needs. Lessons frequently fire pupils' enthusiasm for learning.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Pupils work hard during lessons. They are helpful and supportive towards each other and in their responses to adults. The school makes exceptional provision for pupils' personal development.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and governing body have brought about significant improvements in all aspects of the school's work, including teaching and pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small amount of teaching still requires improvement.
- Sometimes, teachers do not involve pupils in evaluating how well they are doing or how they could make their work even better.
- In a few lessons, teachers do not question pupils enough or get them to explain how they have arrived at the answers they give.
- While above average at the end of Year 6, attainment in mathematics tends to lag behind that in reading and writing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons or parts of lessons. They were accompanied by the headteacher on seven of the observations.
- Meetings were held with governors, the headteacher, senior leaders, members of staff with additional responsibilities, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and discussed it with them. They also listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors took account of the school's information about pupils' attainment and progress, its self-evaluation and plans for future improvements. Inspectors also looked at a range of documents and policies concerned with school management and keeping pupils safe.
- Inspectors considered 18 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were not enough responses to the online survey (Parent View) to trigger an analysis. Inspectors considered the results of the school's own survey of parents' views.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

Godfrey Bancroft, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Lewis

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a little smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly average, but rising steadily. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is a little above average and is also rising steadily.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is broadly average; however, the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is almost twice the national average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional government funding through the pupil premium is broadly average. This funding supports those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, any in the care of the local authority and pupils who have a parent serving in the armed services.
- 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?

- Make sure that all teaching is at least good or better by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to pose and answer questions and to discuss and explain how they have arrived at their answers
 - involving all pupils more in evaluating how well they are progressing and in understanding how to make their work even better.
- Raise attainment in mathematics so that it improves to match that in reading and writing by:
 - strengthening the focus on developing pupils' skills of adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing
 - creating more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills across all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children's knowledge and skills when they begin in the Nursery are below and in some cases well below those expected for their age. Children are given an excellent start and make exceptional progress in all areas of learning.
- The rate of children's progress slows down in the Reception year, but is still good. The majority of children start in Year 1 with knowledge and skills in all areas of learning that are at least average and in some cases above average for their age.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress and by the end of Year 2, standards in reading and writing are above average. Attainment in mathematics lags behind reading and writing and is broadly average.
- During Key Stage 2, pupils' good progress is sustained and by the end of Year 6, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average. However, while improvement in mathematics is evident at Key Stage 2, there is still a slight gap between standards in mathematics and those in reading and writing.
- Throughout the school, pupils are enthusiastic readers, with younger pupils grasping and applying their early knowledge of the sounds that letters make to good effect. Many pupils say they read regularly at school and at home.
- Many disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those who have a statement of special educational needs, make exceptionally good progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language settle in quickly and also make outstanding progress, with several reaching levels that are higher than those expected for their age.
- Those pupils who are entitled to the pupil premium also do well. Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals are a term ahead of their counterparts in other schools and only a term behind other pupils in St Mary's. Some of these pupils reach levels and make progress that exceeds that expected for their age.
- Improvements in attainment and progress can be clearly seen in pupils' books. Attainment has improved greatly since the last inspection. The above average standards seen in Year 6 are on course to be sustained in Years 4 and 5. Many pupils in these year groups are already making more than the expected progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good and during the inspection many lessons included aspects of outstanding practice. Teaching in the Nursery is consistently outstanding in all areas of learning.
- Teachers invariably match work precisely to the needs of different groups of pupils. There is often good challenge for more-able pupils. Work is also planned carefully to meet the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, those entitled to the pupil premium and those who speak English as an additional language. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning of these pupils, and they benefit from individual attention

and from working in small groups.

- The basic skills of speaking and listening, reading, writing, and information and communication technology are taught well. This is also the case in many lessons for mathematics. In a few lessons, teachers do not give enough attention to developing pupils' ability to add, subtract, multiply and divide in mathematics.
- The most effective teaching captures pupils' enthusiasm and interest. As a result, pupils are involved fully in responding to questions and become confident, independent learners. In a few lessons, this is not the case and pupils' progress slows down. This happens when teachers too readily provide answers for pupils, rather than posing questions that enable them to discuss their ideas with their classmates and draw conclusions for themselves.
- The assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is accurate. The information gained from assessment is used well to plan the next stages of pupils' learning. Many pupils, particularly in Year 6, are exceptionally well informed about the levels they have attained and know precisely what to do to reach the next level. There are some lessons in which teachers do not involve pupils enough in assessing their own progress and in thinking about what they need to do next to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour in lessons and around the school, including in the Nursery, is exemplary. Pupils are proud of their school and rightly proud of their achievements.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school and their parents confirm this. The school's outstanding promotion of pupils' personal development enables them to develop confidence as learners. Members of staff, the governing body and indeed the pupils are all fully committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all and to making certain that no form of discrimination is present. In this respect, the dedication of the school's 'pastoral learning mentor' makes an outstanding contribution.
- Pupils fully understand the threat of bullying in its various forms and are committed to ensuring that none takes place. They are fully aware of the dangers posed by inappropriate use of the internet. Pupils show great respect and support for each other. This applies especially to pupils who are new to the school and to those who come from minority ethnic groups.
- Pupils contribute exceptionally well to all aspects of school life. They are proud to be members of the influential school council; they raise funds for charities and participate with great enthusiasm in the wide range of school clubs and eco-projects.
- School leaders have worked effectively to improve attendance and their efforts are bearing fruit. Even so, attendance remains a little below average.

The leadership and management are good

- The highly effective leadership of the headteacher, supported by the governing body and senior leaders is bringing about significant improvements in all aspects of the school's work. Staff with additional responsibilities, such as key stage leaders and the special educational needs

coordinator, also contribute well to school improvement. Leadership and management of the Nursery are outstanding.

- Standards are rising, pupils' progress is improving and the quality of teaching is better than it was. All the improvements have come about since the previous inspection and provide a strong indication of the schools' capacity to go on improving in the future.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and is based on highly effective systems for checking on the quality of the school's work. Careful consideration is given to the findings of self-evaluation to identify what needs to be done to improve further and leaders set challenging targets for pupils' attainment and progress. No-one is complacent and there is a clear commitment to make the school even better.
- The school has become very effective in bringing about improvements in the quality of teaching. This is achieved through frequent checks on teachers' work by school leaders, the governing body and the local authority. There is good support for the continued professional development of teachers and for those who are new to the school and to the profession. Good practice is shared and financial rewards for teachers' performance are linked directly to improvements in pupils' attainment and progress.
- The range of subjects and additional activities provided for pupils caters well for their academic development and for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, in some years not enough is done to develop pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills across all subjects. Provision for pupils' personal development, raising their self-esteem and enabling them to become confident learners, is outstanding. Pupils greatly appreciate, enjoy and benefit from a good range of school clubs and educational visits.
- Links with parents are a strength and the school has excellent systems for keeping them informed about how well their children are progressing. Parents are particularly appreciative of the excellent support provided by the school's 'parent support adviser'.
- The local authority has provided highly effective support for the school. This dates back to 2007 when it supported the school as it emerged from special measures. The local authority has played its part in the school's improvement. It has done this, for example, by checking the school's self-evaluation, sharing information about pupils' attainment and progress and supporting measures that have brought about improvements in the quality of teaching. The local authority is now rightly confident that the school can stand on its own two feet. Even so, the school has chosen to purchase various services from the authority because it values the help it receives.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Several governors are relatively new to their role. Under the highly effective leadership of the Chair of the Governing Body, they are doing a good job. They have also gained in confidence by accessing the training for governors provided by the local authority. Governors are knowledgeable about all aspects of the school's work, including how well pupils from the various groups are progressing. Each governor is linked to one of the classes and they visit frequently to check on pupils' progress and on the success of the various initiatives for improvement. Each committee of the governing body focuses closely on the school's self-evaluation and on the aspects of development for which it is responsible. Governors make sure that the school's budget is used wisely, including checking on the value, in terms of pupils' progress, provided by funding such as the pupil premium. Governors are fully aware of the big impact the 'pastoral learning mentor' has, the 'parent support adviser' and the individually targeted support provided for those pupils who are entitled to the pupil premium.

Governors also fulfil other essential duties well, including make sure that arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils meet current requirements. Governors are fully involved in judging how teachers should be rewarded for improvements in their performance and in evaluating the quality of teaching.

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	121144
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	405998

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Harris
Headteacher	Victoria Long
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2011
Telephone number	01493 445117
Fax number	N/A
Email address	office@st-marys-pri.norfolk.sch.uk

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