

St Mary and St Paul's CofE Primary School

Bryer Road, Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DN

Inspection dates 24–25 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- Achievement is good and attainment is rising.
- Where teaching is good or better, pupils are making outstanding progress in reading and good progress in mathematics.
- The school makes excellent provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils behave well and are polite and considerate to others. They feel very safe.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively. Those pupils entitled to that support are making better progress than similar pupils nationally.
- Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent and gives children an outstanding start to their education.
- Good progress continues throughout Years 1 and 2 and attainment by the end of Year 2 is close to average.
- The school's well thought out programme for the development of reading skills ensures that pupils reach above average standards in reading by the time they reach the end of Year 6.
- Teamwork among the staff is strong, and leaders, governors and staff have accelerated progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching has declined since the last inspection, when it was judged to be outstanding. Leaders do not check frequently enough or robustly enough on the quality of learning taking place in lessons. Teachers do not always know how they can improve.
- Not enough lessons are of the very highest quality. In a few lessons, pupils either do not have sufficient opportunity to find things out for themselves or teachers set the same task for all the pupils in their group.
- The governing body is overly reliant on information provided by the headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons, of which four were joint observations with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. They also listened to pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 reading.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, subject leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority, formally with one group of pupils, and informally with several pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including data about the progress of pupils currently on the roll of the school, records of the governing body meetings, and samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors were unable to gain access to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to assist in planning and carrying out the inspection because insufficient responses had been received. They looked at 15 questionnaires returned by school staff.

Inspection team

Terry McDermott, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Judith Straw

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. The number of pupils on roll can fluctuate from year to year.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for particular groups, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, those from service families and those looked after by the local authority) is well above average.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is small.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or by a statement of special educational need, is also well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school is accredited as a National Teaching School, and holds International School and Eco-schools awards.
- The school governors manage an onsite pre-school provision. This provision is inspected under a different framework. The results of its previous inspection can be found on the Ofsted website.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders check much more closely on the amount of learning taking place in lessons, and feed this information back to teachers clearly, thus enabling them to improve the quality of their teaching.
- Ensure that members of the governing body are able to access other sources of information on pupils' achievement, such as the 'Data Dashboard', in order to hold the school properly to account for its performance.
- Increase the proportion of lessons judged to be sources of outstanding learning by:
 - maximising the time and opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves
 - making certain that any work set meets the different learning needs of all pupils accurately, so that none find it too easy, and none find it too hard to complete.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement is good.
- Children usually enter the nursery with knowledge, skills and understanding well below those typically expected for children of their age, particularly in language and social skills. Improvements to teaching and assessment methods mean that children now make excellent progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Progress continues to be rapid in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, attainment is broadly average in reading and writing and close to average in mathematics. This represents excellent progress given pupils' starting points.
- Pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 is rapid because they are consistently challenged to explain their reasoning to their classmates. This not only builds their self-confidence, but also ensures that other pupils gain a different perspective. This deepens their understanding and secures learning.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress throughout the school because of good teaching, and because of the high quality care, guidance and support they receive either individually or in small groups.
- Good use is made of additional funding to teach and support those pupils who are eligible to receive the pupil premium. Individual literacy programmes and effective additional support in class contribute to these pupils' good progress. Consequently, the significant numbers of pupils who are eligible for free school meals are progressing at the same rate as similar pupils nationally in most subjects. However, the standards of attainment of these pupils in both English and mathematics in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2012 were lower than similar pupils nationally, and about a year behind their classmates.
- Pupils' outstanding progress in reading is based on the school's very effective programme for the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). Thereafter, the school's very strong focus on extending pupils' vocabulary and comprehension skills ensures that they are almost one term in advance of the national average in reading by the end of Year 6.
- Progress in both mathematics and in writing, though improving, is not as strong.
- Pupils leave Year 6 as polite, well-rounded and responsible young citizens well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The quality of teaching is good

- Classrooms are clean, well-resourced and welcoming environments for learning.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent throughout the school.
- Adults' consistent and calm role modelling of high-level personal and social skills relentlessly reaffirms the values of respect and tolerance which are so prevalent throughout the school.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. When teaching is at its best, pupils become engrossed in their work, often being oblivious to any distractions around them. When teaching is less challenging, low-level inattention occurs and learning inevitably slows.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, children are encouraged to think for themselves and to take responsibility for their own behaviour. They have many opportunities to explore and be creative, to think about and respect the views of others, and to be ambitious.
- The very best lessons move forward rapidly and demand a great deal of effort from pupils. Short, sharp practical tasks, requiring sustained concentration and application are key elements of these lessons. Succinct summaries by the teacher, incorporating exemplars from pupils, consolidate thinking before pupils begin transferring their ideas independently to paper. This was seen to outstanding effect in a Year 1 art lesson when pupils used pencils and paints to present their interpretation of a real bunch of daffodils in the style of Georgia O'Keefe. The high expectations of the teacher were met by all pupils with precise, well crafted, and well-

proportioned artwork. Pupils' concentration was total, the outcomes they produced impressive belying their age, and their sense of accomplishment immense.

- Although a significant proportion of outstanding teaching was observed, some teaching that requires improvement was also seen, particularly in Key Stage 2. In these lessons, teachers sometimes did not give pupils enough opportunity for independent research and exploration. On other occasions, the whole class was given the same task to carry out. Higher attaining pupils found this work very easy, and lower attaining pupils never really understood what they had to do. In both of these instances, learning was much slower than it might have been. This is why learning over time is good rather than outstanding.
- Teachers pay close attention to ensuring that pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs receive well-planned support from effective teaching assistants. This enables these pupils to clarify uncertainty and recover lost ground. This ensures that no group of pupils underachieves.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The large majority of pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and respond well to the clear and effective systems the school uses to manage behaviour. As a result, behaviour is good in lessons, at break times, or when pupils are moving around the school. This contributes to the calm atmosphere which pervades this attractive place for learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are unfailingly polite and well mannered. They are impressively thoughtful and considerate to their classmates, to the adults in the school, and to the fabric of the building.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and can explain with clarity why this is the case. They are complimentary about the support they know they will receive from adults should they need it. They say with conviction that there is no bullying in school, though they do admit that there is occasionally some name calling.
- They are aware of the different forms of prejudice based bullying which might occur, 'but not in our school'. The school records confirm only very few isolated instances over several years.
- Although attendance has improved steadily over the past few years, it still remains stubbornly just below the national average. The hard working learning mentor follows up absences with a notable passion. The school is even reminding parents how difficult it is to get an empty chair to learn anything.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher sets high expectations for staff and pupils. He has the full support of his staff and together they work well as a strong team. They make a genuine difference to the lives of the children and families of the community they serve.
- Staff know pupils individually and value their differences. Equality and aspiration are promoted strongly, and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. All pupils have equality of opportunity to access to all that the school has to offer. This means that there is no significant difference in the progress of different groups of pupils.
- The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage has been instrumental in securing the outstanding progress of most children in that phase of the school.
- Almost all of the formal monitoring of teaching is carried out by the headteacher. The identification of areas for improvement does not always let teachers know what they need to do to be more effective. Subject leaders carry out informal checks, but do not always record what they observe.
- The school's view of its own performance is optimistic. It over-emphasizes the impact its admittedly excellent pastoral programme has on pupils' overall academic learning.

- The school's leaders react quickly to address issues which emerge from the national tests. For example, the school development plan was drafted to improve pupils' standards and progress in Key Stage 2 mathematics when these did not show parity of performance with reading. However, the impact of these changes remains to be proven.
 - The curriculum is carefully planned. Topics are used to help pupils to practise the skills and understanding they have learned in a particular subject and to apply and extend them across a range of activities. There is a very strong and successful emphasis throughout the school on developing excellent personal skills, including pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
 - The local authority maintains a light touch monitoring role with the school in line with its policy of encouraging schools to work in self-supporting partnerships. As a teaching school, the school takes a leading role within its own partnership.
 - Because of the marked recent improvement in both standards of reading throughout the school, and in the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school has demonstrated good capacity to secure further improvements.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body ensures that current safeguarding requirements are met in order to keep pupils and staff safe. Members are dedicated and committed, but too accepting of information they are given. Whilst they do know areas where the performance of the school could be better, they do not fully understand how to read and use the pupils' performance information to hold the school to account for its performance. The governing body manage the performance of the headteacher through setting and reviewing agreed objectives. They have agreed systems to monitor the performance of teachers when making decisions about increases in salaries. They manage the school budget prudently, and understand the how the pupil premium funding is helping eligible pupils to achieve. Governors can describe accurately and honestly the journey the school has taken over the last 10 years but is overly reliant on the headteacher's guidance in measuring the school's overall effectiveness.
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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	104453
Local authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	413213

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	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Taylor
Headteacher	Neil Dixon
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2008
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