

St Mary and St Margaret's Church of England Aided Primary School

Southfield Avenue, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham, B36 9AX

Inspection dates

13–14 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' attainment has improved consistently in all year groups in the last two years. Most pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and achieve well.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Strong relationships promote pupils' confident, thoughtful and enthusiastic attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Staff ensure that pupils are well cared for and safe.
- The school is led very effectively by a decisive and ambitious headteacher who has built a good staff including an increasingly influential senior leadership team.
- Pupils are provided with a rich and stimulating range of learning activities which contribute strongly to improving their literacy and numeracy skills and their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The governing body is closely involved in the drive for improvement, and is playing a more active role in the performance management of staff than in the past.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are not guided sufficiently to present their work neatly and accurately. The style of handwriting varies considerably across the school.
- The use of home-school logbooks does not always promote a useful dialogue between teachers and parents about pupils' learning, particularly for older pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons taught by 12 teachers. Eight lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, members of the management team and three members of the governing body. A telephone discussion took place with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work. They examined the school's improvement plans and self-evaluation, safeguarding arrangements, health and safety files and records, school policies, external evaluations of the school's effectiveness and a range of pupils' work.
- Inspectors took account of 39 responses to the online Parent View survey as well as a letter from a parent.
- The inspectors also examined questionnaire responses from 29 members of staff.

Inspection team

Rodney Braithwaite, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Anthony Green	Additional Inspector
Helen Masefield	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mary and St Margaret's Aided Primary School is an average-sized primary school.
- Nearly all pupils are White British, the remainder coming from a range of other ethnic heritages.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have 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 average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families) is below average. There are currently no children of service families in the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection, there have been a number of changes of teaching staff, including the appointment of a new deputy headteacher.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a Nursery and a Reception class.
- In addition, the governing body provides a 'wrap around facility' called the 'Nest', where school staff teach and manage an afternoon class of three-year-old children. This was included in the inspection.
- There are privately managed clubs for children before and after school on the school site. These were not included in the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation of their work results in high quality in all years by:
 - encouraging pupils to always take care and pride when setting out their work and ensuring that there is a consistent approach to using rulers and rubbers
 - developing handwriting skills, including letter formation and joins, so that there is greater consistency across the school.
- Increase the use of the home-school logbooks and ensure that the dialogue between parents and staff supports the progress and learning needs of pupils, especially in Key Stage 2.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Nearly all children start in the Nursery with skills, knowledge and understanding below those expected for their age. Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, particularly in their language development and in their social skills.
- Evidence from a wide range of data, including lesson observations and the work in pupils' books, shows that most boys and girls are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups. This includes disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, more-able pupils, and the small number of pupils from minority ethnic heritages.
- Some past anomalies in teachers' analysis of pupils' progress in writing in Key Stage 1 have been ironed out by the school's rigorous review of pupils' work and close analysis of progress data. As a result of the action taken, pupils' progress has accelerated. Current pupils in Year 2 are on track to reach at least average standards in writing with a good proportion reaching the higher Level 3.
- Attainment in mathematics in Key Stage 2 has improved over recent years and most pupils make good progress and achieve well. Pupils in Year 6, for example, showed the benefits of the improvements in their mathematical skills in a lesson when recalling the properties of quadrilaterals, and their knowledge of several different strategies when multiplying high numbers.
- Achievement in reading is good because the school is ensuring that pupils have a thorough understanding of letters and sounds (phonics) that help them recognise and spell new words. This starts in the Nursery and builds over time with pupils practising reading regularly. Their good grasp of phonics was reflected positively in the screening of Year 1 pupils in 2012, by the above average results.
- Pupils throughout the school read for enjoyment and often widely. Boys, especially, have improved their literacy skills because the school is providing much more appealing resources to cater for their particular interests. Sometimes, the untidy presentation of work and poor handwriting detract from pupils' otherwise high quality writing.
- The skilled and well-planned interventions of teachers and teaching assistants ensure that pupils with statements of special educational needs are achieving as well as other pupils.
- Most pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium have not reached similar levels of attainment to other pupils in the school in both English and mathematics in the past, as measured by their average point scores at the end of Key Stage 2. However data on their progress shows almost all are now making good progress because of effective support, with the result that they are quickly catching up with their classmates.
- Currently, more pupils than in the past in Year 6 are on track to reach above-average standards in English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching in the school is good and sometimes outstanding. For example, excellent teaching promoted outstanding learning in Year 4 when pupils used a strategy of paper cutting to deepen

their understanding of the place value of numbers.

- Teachers have high expectations and good subject knowledge. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher enabled pupils to make rapid gains when learning how to use passive and active sentences and subordinate clauses in their own writing through their study of classic sea poems.
- Occasionally, expectations about the presentation of work are not high enough. There is too little consistency in letter formation and pupils' handwriting styles. Simple routines, such as the appropriate use of rulers and rubbers are not promoted strongly enough. In consequence some work has good content but is untidy.
- Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is good, and children are learning basic skills rapidly and developing independence and self-confidence. However, partly as a result of the 'Nest' being in a separate building, school leaders recognise that the learning intentions set out by staff are not always focused well enough on ensuring consistently good or better learning.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are a strength of the school and strongly benefit learning. All teachers check pupils' learning thoroughly and use the information to plan lessons that meet pupils' different abilities. The system for checking progress has improved markedly in the last two years.
- Teachers have improved their questioning skills considerably, taking into account far better the capabilities of each pupil so that not only is there good equality for all to contribute but more-able learners are routinely asked to 'dig deep' when they answer questions.
- Teachers give useful feedback to pupils about how they are doing and how they can improve their work. Marking and verbal guidance are effective, and most pupils are very clear about their learning targets. However there is little dialogue in the 'home-school logbooks' about how parents and carers can support their child's progress, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Learning support assistants work very effectively and provide many valuable learning interventions for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, and pupils funded by the pupil premium and this is reflected in their good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good as confirmed by parents and staff who are almost unanimous in agreeing that this is typical.
- During the inspection, behaviour was often excellent, especially in lessons that involved 'hands-on' learning experiences. Pupils are friendly and cooperative. They know how to behave safely such as when swimming in the school's own pool, handling large brass musical instruments, or making curry in the cookery club.
- Children in the Nest, Nursery and Reception classes mix happily together and quickly become familiar with routines and how they are expected to behave.
- Pupils have enthusiastic attitudes to their learning. In discussion they mention a wide variety of learning experiences they have enjoyed. For example, they have dressed as characters from books, made boxes for Second World War gas masks, and enjoyed visits to the Botanical Gardens and the National Space Centre.

- Pupils say they have no experience of bullying in school, although a few parents expressed concerns but feel that any instances are dealt with effectively. Pupils have a good understanding of the dangers of cyber bullying but none has any awareness of this happening to anyone in school. There have been no pupil exclusions from school in the last year.
- Pupils' behaviour is strongly supported by the excellent provision in the school for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education which is promoted in all years, as for example in Reception when children all joined in a prayer at the end of the morning.
- Attendance has traditionally been above average in the school. It has fallen slightly in this school year, almost entirely as a result of a very contagious sickness bug before Christmas.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, strongly supported by the deputy headteacher, has driven improvement energetically and with considerable success since the previous inspection. Notable strengths include increasing the amount of good or better teaching, providing challenging work for more able pupils, and helping pupils to understand their learning targets. These features together with pupils' good achievement highlight the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.
- The staff are enthusiastic to help the school move forward and the increasingly effective management team are well focussed on ensuring that pupils' achievement is the best it can be.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, has been developed rigorously leading to significant improvement and has ensured that there is no inadequate teaching in the school.
- The training needs of staff including those of newly qualified teachers are an integral part of the school's accurate self-evaluation and action planning. Teachers' targets are closely related to improving pupils' progress, as well as meeting both the school and individual needs.
- The development of a wider range of learning activities across all subjects has helped in the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. This has been very noticeable in the improvement of pupils' knowledge of the different faiths and cultures in modern British society.
- School leaders promote equal opportunities and cooperation strongly. This results in no discrimination through gender, ethnic heritage, disability or special educational needs.
- Use of the pupil premium funding is monitored robustly by leaders and the governing body. Funding is clearly targeted at raising achievement including one-to-one support, enrichment resources, the provision of wider learning opportunities and family support, especially in mathematics and reading.
- The local authority has been supportive and effective in assisting the school's good improvement, particularly in mathematics.
- The school has excellent relationships with parents virtually all of whom would recommend it to others.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body, led by an experienced long serving Chair, have a good

knowledge of the schools' strengths and improvement priorities. They are intensely proud of the pupils and staff, but are always ready to challenge leaders especially about pupils' progress and achievement. They have several active committees, and visit the school regularly to see how things are going. Governors set clear performance targets for the headteacher that link closely to pay scales. They are extending their knowledge about salary progression relating to the quality of teaching and its effect on pupils' progress. Governors make sure that school policies are regularly reviewed and that safeguarding arrangements meet regulatory 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	104097
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	404924

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	251
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dennis Jordan
Headteacher	Mark Street
Date of previous school inspection	14 February 2011
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Email address	office@ss-m-and-m.solihull.sch.uk

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