

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

St Richard's Road, Deal, Kent, CT14 9LF

Inspection dates 9–10 May 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. There have been considerable improvements in the progress that they are making in reading, writing and mathematics since the last inspection.
- Almost all lessons observed were at least good, with a number of examples of outstanding practice. This consistently good picture of teaching is the key reason for pupils' good and improving progress.
- Teaching assistants are skilled and make a considerable contribution to learning, particularly for those pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs. This ensures these pupils achieve as well as, and at times better than, their peers.
- Pupils are polite and are very caring towards each other. They behave well. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are a strength of the school ensuring a purposeful working atmosphere. Pupils are kept very safe and all parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) agree that their children feel safe.
- There is a very clear commitment to further improvement, ably led by the headteacher and shared by all staff and members of the governing body. There has been significant improvement in leadership by subject leaders since the last inspection. Procedures to check on the quality of teaching and improve it are particularly thorough and effective.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always give pupils sufficient information so that they know exactly what they must do to improve their work and move on in their learning, particularly in mathematics.
- Teaching is not always pitched at the right level so that pupils sometimes lose concentration, and progress in their learning slows.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They visited 12 lessons, of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons, assemblies and the breakfast club.
- They held meetings with leaders and managers, staff and pupils, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met informally with parents and carers at the beginning and end of the school day, and took account of the 32 responses from the online questionnaire (Parent View) and individual communications from a number of parents and carers.
- They observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's current information on pupils' progress, the school's checks on its own effectiveness, the school improvement action plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding documents.
- Inspectors sampled pupils' work, listened to them read, and checked information on pupils' attendance.
- The inspectors analysed 26 questionnaires from staff.

Inspection team

Gay Whent, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Carole Skinner

Additional Inspector

Una Stevens

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- The school is a member of the Deal Learning Alliance, which includes 12 schools.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one Reception class.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion of those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. These pupils have a variety of barriers to learning, including behavioural, social, physical and emotional needs and specific learning difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families) is below average.
- 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?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by making sure that all teachers:
 - plan their lessons to be pitched more consistently to appropriate levels of challenge, closely matched to pupils' needs and abilities, so that pupils' attention and interest are maintained throughout their learning
 - understand the need for constructive feedback, particularly when marking in mathematics, so that all pupils are fully aware of their next steps in learning, giving them time to reflect on and respond to the teacher's comments.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children start school in the Reception Year, many are working below the expected level for their age. As a result of teaching that is good or better, they develop personal, social and emotional skills that enable them to settle into school quickly and start to benefit from very well-planned and resourced provision. This has a strong emphasis on learning through purposeful play, and for that reason, children's achievement is good or better.
- The teaching of phonics (learning about the sounds that letters make) is improving since the focus on guided reading and involvement of parents and carers in understanding the importance of supporting their child's reading. Consequently, pupils are making much faster progress than in the past in their reading because they confidently use their knowledge of letters and sounds to read words they cannot recognise whatever their reading ability. Pupils enjoy reading, developing a love of books and thirst for knowledge. One described how he took his latest Michael Morpurgo book home, 'sat on the sofa and couldn't put it down until I had finished it an hour and a half later!'
- Attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 is improving at a faster rate than nationally, so that almost all pupils are now making the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. An increasing number make even better progress in reading and writing.
- Opportunities to accelerate pupils' progress in some lessons through providing even more closely matched and challenging work or giving focused and helpful feedback are not yet a consistent feature of all teaching.
- Pupils who benefit from the pupil premium funding make good progress overall as their needs are accurately identified and a range of effective strategies are put into place to improve their learning. The funding has been used to provide support from additional teachers to lead small-group learning activities as well as additional support to help them catch-up led by skilled teaching assistants. As a result, the school is successfully closing the gap and all who benefit from the pupil premium reach only slightly lower levels of attainment compared to other pupils in the school in English and achieve higher levels of attainment in mathematics.
- Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good or better progress in English and mathematics, which is leading to higher attainment. This is due to the training opportunities given to both teachers and their support staff, particularly in relation to developing pupils' speech, language and communication. Adults are skilful in setting them small, achievable targets to give pupils confidence and a sense of achievement.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is not yet outstanding as not all teachers give constructive feedback when they are marking mathematics so that all pupils are fully aware of their next steps in learning, giving them time to reflect on and respond to the teacher's comments. In an outstanding example, pupils effectively improved their writing, changing 'Ulrick remembered the crystal star. Ulrick grabbed it.' to the more dramatic 'Without warning, Ulrick grabbed it.'
- Well-planned lessons ensure that most activities are set at the right level of difficulty for the varying abilities of different groups of pupils. Sometimes, however, work is not always pitched at the right level, with the result that they do not maintain pupils' interests well enough and progress slows.
- Lessons are consistently interesting. They are carefully planned to appeal to both boys and girls. An example of successful problem solving in mathematics took place when lessons were linked to the current Mexican theme, creating tacos by choosing ingredients from a menu and adding them together before working out the change from a given amount.
- Where teaching shows outstanding features, pupils enjoy the skilled questioning of their teacher,

for example as they followed a giant's chalk footprints out of their classroom. They are all absorbed in their learning. Older pupils skilfully explain how Shakespeare has used language effectively to gain a reader's interest. In 'All the world's a stage', they explained that 'mewling and puking' is a much more effective way to describe a baby crying than whining as it 'sounds just like a cat crying'.

- Pupils' progress meetings are held six times each year and focus on each pupil making good or better progress, particularly those who may be vulnerable to underachievement. As a result, provision for those children at risk is adapted so that it is better matched to their specific learning needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- All adults have extremely good relationships with pupils. As a result, disruptive or inattentive behaviour in classes is rare. The school has a very strong ethos which promotes respect and responsibility.
- The school's new system at the beginning of the day where parents and carers leave their children at the school gate has had a positive impact on punctuality. The 'wake up, shake up' whole-school start prior to registration is enjoyed by all.
- Throughout the inspection, pupils behaved sensibly at all times when in the school. Pupils say that this is almost always the case and that if there are problems, adults deal with them straightaway whether they are in the school or outside with pupils at lunchtime. Parents and carers, staff and governors agree behaviour is good.
- The school's curriculum is rich and interesting, and successfully engages pupils' interests. It is used to promote e-safety. Pupils know what to do when they use the internet so that they will be safe.
- Pupils say that the school is a safe place and that they cannot remember bullying taking place in the last two years. They would go to any adult for help if they needed to do so and they trust them all.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding as, where teachers do not pitch their work precisely to pupils' needs, some lose their concentration and their attention waivers.
- Attendance rates are increasing annually and are now average. The school promotes good attendance and does its utmost to reduce absence with a wide range of promotions such as certificates and prizes for good attendance. The school's Family Liaison Officer works closely with families where attendance is a concern and this is having a very positive impact on these children's attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has an effective leadership team. Leaders, including subject leaders, are working effectively together to raise pupils' achievement. This is showing good and better progress in each year group for all abilities of learners.
- The school's evaluation of its own effectiveness accurately focuses on improving the quality of teaching and increasing the outcomes for all pupils. Pupils' progress across the school is checked regularly and methodically in order to meet their learning needs ever more precisely. The school uses a wealth of information which is analysed with teachers so that they are fully involved in progress discussions.
- Leaders focus sharply on ensuring that all pupils fulfil their potential, that they have equal opportunities to prosper and that there is no discrimination. The pupil premium has been used in a variety of ways to improve the learning of eligible pupils. For example, one-to-one tuition has had a good effect on pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and the funding of residential visits helps to improve their confidence.
- Teachers are accountable for the progress of pupils in their class as part of the school's system for managing their performance. Targets also reflect school priorities. All staff have access to an

effective programme for professional training which is provided to improve teachers' knowledge, skills and understanding. However, leaders have not yet fully addressed the inconsistencies in teaching and, as a result, pupils' progress overall is good rather than outstanding.

- The local authority has provided a very appropriate level of support which has supported the school's focus on improvement by outlining clear next-step guidance. The local authority now shares St Mary's successful good practice, particularly in relation to subject leadership, with other schools in the Deal Learning Alliance.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Members of the governing body have a good understanding of the school's performance and how it compares to other schools nationally. School leaders are held properly to account. Governors know the school's priorities for improvement as well as the school's strengths through their involvement with development planning and their visits. They are aware of the quality of teaching and they check the management of staff performance well, ensuring that it is used to reward and recognise good teaching through its link with the Teachers' Standards and the links to teachers' pay. Governors are well trained and, as a result, are able to fulfil their statutory duties well, including those for safeguarding. They manage the finances carefully, evaluating the impact of spending. They are aware of how the pupil premium funding is spent and ensure that it is correctly used to benefit the learning of those pupils in receipt of the funding. They are aware that this is to narrow the gap between those pupils and their peers. Governors are proud of their school and determined that it should be even better.

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	118763
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	405816

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	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gaye Waters
Headteacher	Annie Keane
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2011
Telephone number	01304 375046
Fax number	01304 375046
Email address	headteacher@st-marys-deal.kent.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

