

St Mary Magdalene CofE Primary School

48 Brayards Road, London, SE15 3RA

Inspection dates 27–28 June 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils work hard and they make good progress so that, by the end of Year 6, their attainment in English and mathematics is above average.
- Teaching is typically good, with an increasing proportion that is outstanding. Teaching is lively and imaginative and well matched to the needs of pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils feel very safe in school knowing that they are valued for the unique contribution they make to the school.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well through the rich and diverse curriculum. The quality of art, music and drama is a particular strength.
- All pupils achieve consistently well because teachers monitor their progress and quickly intervene to ensure that no pupil is left behind. This demonstrates their commitment to equality of opportunity.
- The school is a harmonious community in which pupils from all backgrounds get on well together. Pupils are thoughtful and reflective and are sensitive to the needs of others.
- School leaders and governors have an accurate view of what the school does well and where improvements need to be made. They quickly took action to reverse the decline that followed the previous inspection and are well on track to improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers consistently challenge pupils by asking probing questions that make them work hard and extend their learning.
- Pupils do not always correct and improve their work in response to teachers' marking.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons, four of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. They looked at work in pupils' books and they listened to pupils read in Year 2 and Year 6. They attended an assembly and observed pupils at break times.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, governors, groups of pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- Among the documents scrutinised were plans for school development, records of pupils' progress, minutes from governors' meetings and documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- The views of parents were considered through the 17 responses to the on-line survey, Parent View, as well as a letter sent to the inspection team. The inspectors also took account of the 12 responses from staff who completed the staff survey.

Inspection team

Joy Considine, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jill Thewlis

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and about a third of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is much higher than usual. This is additional funding provided by the government to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, who are looked after, or whose parents are members of the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and who have special educational needs supported at school action is broadly average, as is the proportion that is supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception class.
- There has been a significant change to both the teaching team and the leadership team since the previous inspection. The headteacher joined the school in April 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that a higher proportion is outstanding by:
 - consistently asking pupils questions that challenge them to think more deeply and to extend their knowledge and understanding
 - providing opportunities for pupils to correct and improve their work in response to teachers' marking.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, work hard. They achieve well across the school so that, by the end of Year 6, they reach standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Scrutiny of work in their books shows that they make consistently good progress in writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils. They receive targeted support from skilled teaching assistants who help them by explaining what they are expected to learn.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding reach standards that are above those of similar pupils nationally. In the 2012 national tests, these pupils were approximately four months behind their classmates in English and three months ahead in mathematics. Current data show that these pupils attain at least as well as their peers. This is because these pupils are well supported in their academic and personal development from adults, who monitor their progress carefully.
- Children join the Reception class with skills below those expected for their age and they make good progress across all areas of learning. They learn to work and play safely together and enjoy learning to read and write and to count and measure. They make particularly good progress in speaking and listening and enjoy talking to adults about their learning.
- Pupils across the school love reading. By the end of Year 6 they read confidently with expression and meaning. They value reading both to help them to learn as well as to read for pleasure. They talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors and the different sorts of books they enjoy.
- Standards in writing have improved and are above average. Pupils write confidently and fluently in all lessons. Their handwriting is neat, with letters clearly formed, and their spelling and punctuation are accurate. They use a wide range of vocabulary with words carefully chosen to express their thoughts and opinions.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics because lessons are lively and engaging. There are good links between subjects so that pupils apply their skills in different contexts. For example, Year 6 pupils created some artistic patterns to demonstrate parabola as part of their work on shape and space.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is always good and occasionally outstanding. It is typically lively and stimulating and captures pupils' interest. Consequently, pupils behave well and make good progress. Nevertheless, school leaders recognise the need to develop a higher proportion of outstanding teaching to secure outstanding progress for pupils.
- Teachers create a calm, welcoming positive learning environment, which fosters good relationships and promotes high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and they know their classes well. In the Early Years Foundation Stage there is a good balance of activities that children select for themselves and those that are led by adults and this helps children to make good progress.
- Teachers use assessment information effectively to plan lessons that enable all pupils to make good progress. Lessons build on previous learning and teaching assistants provide effective extra support to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. This helps those pupils to make progress at rates similar to their classmates.
- Throughout lessons, teachers check that pupils understand what they are expected to do and so learning proceeds at a good pace. Pupils enjoy learning and readily seek help or support from adults or each other if they get stuck. Teachers encourage pupils to talk about their work and share their ideas and this helps them to improve their skills.

- Although teachers ask pupils questions to check their understanding, they do not always ask questions that require pupils to analyse and interpret information or to challenge them to think and to work harder.
- Teachers provide activities that are imaginative and this inspires pupils to learn. In a Year 3 lesson pupils were presented with a 'mission' to find words that had been placed around the playground by using coordinates that they had learned about the previous day. Despite the rain, they used their compass points accurately to search the playground, until all words had been found.
- Most teachers are skilled at assessing pupils' learning in lessons and adapting it to address any misunderstandings or to move it on at a faster pace. They intervene, with a sensitive balance between supporting some pupils, while giving more independence to those who can work unaided.
- Teachers usually mark pupils' work regularly and they provide clear guidance about what pupils have done well and what they need to do to improve their work further. However, there are too few occasions when pupils respond to these comments by correcting and improving their own work and this means they do not always make as much progress as they could.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- All pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school, showing respect for adults and each other. They make an exceptional contribution to their own learning. They are very proud of their school and take great care when using resources, books and equipment.
- Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their attendance, which is above average. Staff have created a safe and stimulating environment, which is bright and attractive and reflects the good quality of work produced by pupils. The playground has been carefully developed to create areas where pupils can think and reflect, as well as where they can play more robust games together.
- The school actively promotes core values including trust, honesty and forgiveness, and these underpin the school policies for behaviour and safety. Consequently, pupils feel safe from intimidation, bullying and danger. They say that everyone gets on well together, regardless of background, and that there is no bullying.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Through the curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE), they have learned about the dangers associated with substance abuse relating to alcohol, tobacco and some drugs. They also have a good awareness about different forms of bullying such as physical, emotional and cyber bullying.
- Inclusion and equality are promoted at every level and discrimination on any grounds is not tolerated. The school provides outstanding care for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, enabling them to feel happy and safe in school and to make good academic progress.
- Records relating to behaviour kept by the school show very few reported incidents and there have been no exclusions in recent years. Parents agree that pupils behave well and that they are safe in school.

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders and governors are ambitious and this is reflected in their drive to secure further improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement. The leadership team has been strengthened through new appointments to secure greater consistency in their approach. Allied to a track record of improvement, this clearly demonstrates the school's capacity to continue to improve.
- Thorough and accurate analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses underpins the school's development plans. These are focused clearly on improving teaching and ensuring that all pupils achieve as much as they can, both personally and academically.

- School leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and they provide guidance and support to help teachers to improve their skills. Previously weaker teaching has been addressed so that it is all consistently good or better. Teachers understand that their progression on the pay scale is linked to the quality of their teaching.
 - School leaders have invested in a planned programme of professional development for all staff. This links to their performance management targets and to the priorities in the school development plan. This has led to improvements in pupils' achievement so that it is consistently good across the school.
 - The curriculum is very well planned to meet the needs of all pupils and prepare them well for the next stage of their education. Pupils spoke knowledgeably about the links they have with a school in Uganda, demonstrating their good understanding of life in different parts of the world. There is a wide range of additional activities, including yoga, puppetry and music, all of which promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
 - New leaders quickly took steps to reverse the decline in pupils' achievement which followed the previous inspection. Consequently, the quality of teaching improved and pupils' achievement is good. The local authority has full confidence in school leaders and provides light touch support for the school.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well. They visit regularly and receive good quality information from school leaders that helps them to check on the progress of the school. Recent training has strengthened their skills in challenging the school's performance. They know how the school performs in relation to other schools and they know about the quality of teaching. They understand that only the best teaching is rewarded and that systems to monitor teachers' performance are robust. Governors are fully involved in the allocation of pupil premium funding. They know that it is partially used to provide additional support for pupils in the classroom, as well as to help them to take part in school visits and clubs, and to ensure that no pupil is left out of any activities provided by the school. Governors ensure that all requirements for safeguarding pupils are met.
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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	100836
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	413259

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	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Charter
Headteacher	Jennifer Parris
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2009
Telephone number	020 7639 1724
Fax number	020 7732 4276
Email address	admin@stmarymagdalene.southwark.sch.uk

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