

St Mary's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School

Ayr Drive, Jarrow, Tyne and Wear, NE32 4AW

Inspection dates 10–11 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 are very well behaved and their attitude towards their work is outstanding.
- Pupils are happy and feel very safe at school.
- The achievement of pupils from their starting point is good and improving, especially in reading.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress compared to other pupils.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage provision has significantly improved since the previous inspection and is justifiably highly rated by parents.
- Teaching is good because teachers have high expectations of the pupils.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors form a strong team which has improved teachers' performance as well as the achievement of the pupils.
- The social, moral and spiritual development of pupils is outstanding, as the school recognises that this is as important to pupils as their academic achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching was judged to be outstanding.
- In some lessons teachers tend to spend too long in their explanations, leaving less time for the pupils to do their work.
- Pupils make less progress in writing than in reading and mathematics. Spelling and punctuation are weaker.
- When pupils' writing is marked they do not have sufficient opportunities to respond to teachers' comments in order to improve.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with half a day's notice.
- Inspectors visited 17 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 10 different teachers.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about how much reading they do, as well as looking at their work in class.
- Discussions took place with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and a telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Documents were examined, including those relating to safeguarding, the school's improvement plan, and records of its checks on teaching and learning, as well as the school's own assessment data.
- The views of 13 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were also taken into account, as well the school's own questionnaires, which surveyed 37 parents.
- Questionnaires about their views of the school were also completed by 24 staff.

Inspection team

Frank Cain, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Julie McGrane

Additional Inspector

Derek Sleightholme

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mary's RC is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, forces children, and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average, but the proportion at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is below average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- There is provision for 'wrap around care' before and after school that children can attend, staffed by teaching assistants and managed by the governing body.
- Government floor standards, which relate to pupils' attainment and progress, have been met in 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rate of progress in writing, so it is at least as good as it is in reading and increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring all lessons give pupils more time to get on with their work by having less time devoted to teachers' lengthy introductions
 - giving pupils the opportunity to respond to teachers' guidance on how their written work could be improved
 - continuing the focus on improving pupils' spelling and punctuation.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children enter the school they have skills which are below and sometimes well below those expected for their age. By the time they leave their attainment is close to the national average, which represents good progress from their starting points.
- Good and outstanding teaching in the Nursery makes the Early Years Foundation Stage a strength of the school. No time is wasted to encourage the children to learn. For example, registration time is used to practise counting numbers to 10.
- In the past some children in Key Stage 2 did not make as much progress as expected, but this is not the case now, and older pupils make progress at a rate which is often better than found nationally.
- Attainment is rising in both key stages and reading is particularly strong. Good progress has been made in phonics and Year 2 pupils are able to read well for their age. By Year 6, most pupils are very fluent readers and can confidently explain about their favourite books and authors. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is improving and the school is developing good mental skills to enable pupils to work answers out in their heads. Writing, more especially punctuation and spelling, is weaker but improving because of the strong focus the school is employing to improve these skills.
- All pupils have the opportunity to do well in the school because of the school's strong commitment to ensuring everyone has an equal chance to succeed.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress that is at least in line with other pupils in school, and is sometimes better, because of timely support from teachers and their assistants.
- The gap between the attainment of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils is wide in Key Stage 1. However, by the time they reach Year 6 their attainment matches other pupils. The school has narrowed the gap between these two groups of pupils by good classroom support from teachers and teaching assistants. Free school meals pupils' attainment in mathematics has improved particularly strongly this year.

The quality of teaching is good

- The school has excellent facilities in the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor learning area, which are used extremely well by staff to help children to gain knowledge quickly, so that they understand numbers and letters as well as find out how things work.
- In the majority of lessons the work is well matched to pupils' abilities and there is sufficient challenge to enable pupils to make good progress. In a Key Stage 2 English lesson, pupils had to decide how different authors start stories in ways that capture the reader's interest.
- Teachers have very high expectations of pupils. In a Year 1 lesson, higher-ability pupils were asked to write a description using alliteration (where consecutive words start with a similar sound) to which pupils responded extremely well, when writing their sentences.
- Teachers regularly assess their pupils' learning, and books are marked regularly. Pupils, however, are not given enough time and opportunity to respond to teachers' written suggestions on how their written work could be improved.
- Lessons are consistently good because learning usually takes place at a brisk pace. In a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson, pupils were given a good starter task, then were expected to use different ways of calculating answers to problems with lots of teacher encouragement. The good practice evident in planning and delivering lessons is not shared as widely as it could be with other colleagues.
- In a few lessons the pace of learning slowed, as pupils were not given enough time to show what they could do, because teacher introductions or explanations were too long.

- The pupils rate their teachers very highly, especially their expertise in specialist subjects such as physical education, science and foreign languages. Pupils say that lessons are interesting and fun.
- Teachers use resources carefully to help pupils to develop their enterprise and communication skills. Children in the Nursery grow their own vegetables and salad. Teachers used this to get children to make a mixed salad, and they sell or give surplus vegetables to parents.
- Good teaching helps children rapidly develop self-confidence. A child in the Reception class was able to give her classmates a couple of verses from a Tina Turner song, while a boy in Nursery was able to treat friends to a puppet show with no adult support.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour logs indicate that behaviour is very good. There are no recorded racist incidents and there have been no exclusions for a number of years.
- The good relationships between teachers and their pupils is a very strong feature of this school. The behaviour policy is well understood by all pupils and staff. Pupils say there are no major incidents of bullying because any would be dealt with quickly and firmly.
- The pupils' attitude towards their learning is excellent. They enjoy their learning and quickly get down to work with the minimum of fuss.
- Pupils are extremely well mannered and without any prompting pull up chairs and hold doors open for visitors.
- In assembly and when moving around the school pupils show respect for others.
- The pupils are very well behaved at break and lunchtime. Some were practicing their roles for the forthcoming '*Alice in Wonderland*' concert, while others were chatting about their move to the secondary school.
- The school has extended outdoor learning in their 'forest school' work, which takes place in a small woodland area within the school site. Children from Nursery put on their waterproofs (some with a little help) and pulled a cart between them containing snacks and drinks. This promotes excellent teamwork and encourages children to take on roles of responsibility.
- The school encourages many pupils to take on roles of responsibility. Older pupils take their role of 'buddies' very seriously and accompany their young friends into lunch. The school council organises the school's sports day and many pupils take on roles as prefects.
- Attendance is just below the national average. The school is working hard to improve it, and it has succeeded in substantially reducing the proportion of pupils who have multiple absences and in tackling lateness to school.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school, which was endorsed by parents and staff. Older pupils have a very good understanding of the dangers that communication using computers and mobile phones can present.
- Pupils who attend the before- and after-school care facilities are well looked after by staff. It helps their school work as well as giving them good social experiences.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is an effective leader who has successfully improved teaching and learning. The performance of teachers is very well managed and organised and is shared between the senior leaders. There are clear expectations on teachers to improve pupils' progress and to contribute to the school's development.
- The headteacher and senior managers respond well to challenges. For example, they have made changes which made sure that the recent phonics screening test results show a huge improvement since 2012.
- Pupils' social, moral and spiritual development is a strength of the school. The religious atmosphere of the school and its focus on developing the whole child, not just on academic

achievement, is outstanding.

- Since the previous report, curriculum changes have allowed a greater coverage of the study of other cultures. Pupils find the school curriculum exciting and in particular enjoy their topic work on 'space' and 'the rain forests'. Pupils are allowed a degree of freedom to explore their own interests within these areas.
- Links with parents are good and there are popular coffee mornings, as well as workshops to help them support their children in mathematics.
- The local authority has given the school very good support in helping the school to check on how successful it is in teaching and learning.
- The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils meet current statutory requirements. All staff understand the procedures to help keep pupils safe and the school's records of staff show that safeguarding is well managed.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors regularly evaluate how much progress pupils are making throughout the school. They are aware of the quality of teaching and consider that it is important to link teachers' salaries to how well their pupils are doing so that good teaching is rewarded. They are kept very well informed of the difference that has been made by the pupil premium funding to the achievement of these pupils.

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	108722
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	413128

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	271
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr B Stenhouse
Headteacher	Miss M Elliott
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2009
Telephone number	0191 4898336
Fax number	0191 4898338
Email address	melliott@st-marysrc.s-tyneside.sch.uk

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