

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Ann's Hill Road, Gosport, PO12 3NB

Inspection dates 16–17 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- There is not enough good and outstanding teaching to make sure that enough pupils are reaching standards at or above the levels expected for their age.
- Marking does not always help pupils to know how well they are doing and how they can improve their work.
- Work is not always challenging enough to make sure that more able pupils make good progress.
- Current plans for improving the school do not provide clear enough guidance on the actions that need to happen to bring about sustained improvements over the next few years.
- Leaders are not using data well enough to compare achievement with national averages and to set targets to close the gap.
- There are not enough governors to carry out their roles effectively.

The school has the following strengths

- The quality of teaching is improving and standards are rising.
- Pupils enjoy school because the curriculum is rich and teachers give pupils interesting work to do.
- Pupils feel safe and their behaviour is good.
- Teaching assistants provide good support to pupils of all abilities.
- The extra help provided for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is helping them to catch up with their peers.
- Leaders and governors are aware of what the school does well and have a growing understanding of where it needs to improve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 21 lessons and parts of lessons.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other leaders in school, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 37 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as the views of parents from discussions in the playground.
- Information about how well school leaders know how good the school is and their plans for school improvement, as well as assessment information, minutes of meetings of the governing body, teachers' planning, pupils' work and safeguarding procedures, were examined.
- Inspectors analysed 21 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Jeanne Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alan Jones

Additional Inspector

David Shears

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mary's Catholic Primary School is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding (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 proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is much lower than average.
- The proportions of pupils who speak English as an additional language or are from ethnic minority groups are below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - making sure that all pupils are always given work which provides the right level of challenge, particularly the more able
 - using information about how well pupils are doing more regularly to check that all pupils are making as much progress as possible
 - making sure when marking books that pupils are given guidance about how they can improve their work and then giving them opportunities to put the advice into practice
 - checking throughout the lesson that the pupils who are not working in a group with an adult are making good progress.
- Ensure that leaders consistently communicate and set high expectations and ambition by:
 - developing a long-term plan for the continued improvement of the school
 - using the information about how well pupils are doing to set challenging targets to raise standards
 - working with the diocese to recruit new governors who can hold leaders to account for the continued improvement of the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In recent years, the achievement of too many pupils has not been good enough, particularly in Key Stage 2. This has resulted in much underachievement.
- This year, there have been rapid improvements in the progress made by all pupils and, as a result, standards are rising. However, too few pupils currently reach or exceed the standards expected for their age by the end of Year 6, particularly in English. Pupils for whom English is an additional language or are from minority ethnic groups make similar progress to others in their classes.
- Children enter Reception class with skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. They make expected progress and enter Year 1 with the basic skills they need for the next stage of their education.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is effective and pupils quickly develop a love of reading and acquire the skills they need to become fluent readers.
- Pupils' good attitudes towards reading continue throughout Key Stage 1 and standards of reading at the end of Year 2 are consistently above average. Improved progress this year means that more pupils are also working at the levels expected for their age in writing and mathematics.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have declined significantly since the previous inspection and, until this year, have been below average, particularly in writing. In all year groups, standards are now rising. However, not enough pupils reach the higher levels and more able pupils are not always provided with the levels of challenge they need to reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in reading and mathematics because the support they receive meets their needs well and is helping them to catch up. The progress they make in writing is more inconsistent and they are about one year behind their peers.
- Pupils who are eligible for the additional funding through the pupil premium make better than expected progress and their attainment is broadly average. There are no significant gaps between their attainment and that of their peers. Teachers make sure that these pupils, whatever their ability, receive support which is well matched to their needs, including one-to-one tuition and specialist programmes in mathematics.
- In the past, there has been an over-reliance on tests to provide information about how well pupils are doing. Teachers are now using the results of day-to-day assessments which give them more helpful details about pupils' achievement. However, the data are not yet being used well enough to compare the rates of progress of different groups of pupils and identify whether all groups are doing as well as they should compared with national averages.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently good enough across the school. However, the good and outstanding teaching which exists provides the school with the opportunity to share the expectations of teaching from which all pupils should be able to benefit.
- The school has introduced a new way of organising the teaching and learning so that each class is divided into four groups. Two groups work with either the teacher or the teaching assistant and two groups work independently. The new structure mostly works well.
- The groups working with the adults make good progress in their learning because of the support they receive through questioning and through the guidance they get as they are working, from the teacher or from the skilled teaching assistants. Pupils say that they enjoy this way of working and that if they get stuck when working on their own, they know how to get help through 'The 5 Bees' – book, brain, board, buddy or boss. In spite of these strategies,

sometimes the concentration of pupils in the independent groups wavers and the pace of learning slows. The progress of the independent groups is not monitored closely enough in order that timely action can be taken to help pupils get back on task.

- When learning in lessons is not good, this is often because the work does not provide the right levels of challenge, particularly for the more able. Teachers do not use the information they have about pupils' achievement well enough to plan tasks which help all pupils to take the next steps in their learning.
- Teachers consistently share with the pupils what they are expected to learn and how they know whether they have been successful. Pupils are involved in developing the success criteria for the lesson which really make them think about what they have to achieve.
- Teachers mark work regularly and they usually provide comments about what the pupils have done well. Sometimes they also tell the pupils what they need to do to improve their work and then give them time to put the advice into practice, but this is not consistent.
- Pupils are often encouraged to discuss their learning and their ideas in pairs which gives them a chance to explore their ideas further and to learn from each other. The discussion also provides them with opportunities to develop their communication skills and to practise the technical vocabulary they have heard in the lesson.
- Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons. This is because teachers give pupils a real purpose for learning across a range of subjects. In an outstanding lesson in a Year 5/6 class, pupils were writing a persuasive speech from one of two viewpoints; half the pupils were writing as if they were Roman slaves on why the Colosseum should be pulled down while the other pupils were pretending to be the owners of the Colosseum and were defending its use. The speeches were to be used the next day in a debate. This also made them empathise with different people's views, which contributed well to their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour around the school is good. They are polite and usually show good levels of respect to each other and to adults. In the playground there are very good levels of supervision and the pupils enjoy the large amount of space available.
- The records that the school keeps show a relatively high number of incidents of fighting or bullying and a few parents expressed concern about the amount of bullying in school. They feel that they are not always fully informed, both when incidents happen and about what happens as a consequence. However, pupils say that they feel safe and that bullying is rare and most staff agree that behaviour is good. Behaviour over time has improved and rates of fixed-term exclusions are very low.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when they are on the internet.
- Most pupils have good attitudes to learning and teachers use the behaviour policy well in the few instances of inappropriate behaviour in whole-class teaching time. During lessons, pupils are often given opportunities to work together. They enjoy talking about their learning and they support each other sensibly.
- The school places high priority on regular attendance and, as a result, attendance has improved over time and is above national averages. Parents are sent text messages if the school has not been informed about a child's absence and a letter is sent out if there is no response. There is almost no persistent absence. Lateness is also dealt with firmly so that pupils and parents are made aware of the importance of being in school, on time and ready to learn.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Over the last few years, less attention than was necessary has been given to checking on the progress and attainment of pupils and achievement has fallen as a result.

- New appointments have been made to the leadership team and training has been put in place to make sure that all leaders are helped to develop the qualities and skills they need. This has resulted in higher standards of attainment and accelerating progress throughout the school. This strengthening picture indicates that there is capacity for further improvement.
 - The school's vision, which is closely linked to the faith aspect of the school, is shared by all. All staff model respect for each other and for pupils, and pupils reflect this back.
 - Leaders regularly observe teaching and learning and they accurately identify the successful aspects of practice and where it needs to improve. The written feedback teachers receive helps them to reflect on their practice. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving.
 - Leaders use information about pupils' achievement to check that different groups of pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium funding, are making enough progress, which means that the school is promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. However, they are not yet using the information to compare achievement with national averages and set challenging targets which will help the school to ensure that even faster progress is made.
 - Leaders know what the school does well and where it needs to improve. However, there is currently no long-term plan in place for the continued improvement of the school over the next few years. This limits the school's ability to be sufficiently strategic. Leaders are aware of this gap and are starting to develop a more coherent approach.
 - High quality art displays around the school provide vivid evidence of the wide curriculum that the pupils enjoy and the good opportunities provided for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Geography and history are brought to life through visits out of school and pupils are able to apply their basic skills through the work they do in these subjects, such as when pupils in Year 3 studied a local village and based their work around the visit they had made.
 - The school is involved in a number of successful partnerships in the local area. Teachers share good practice through a local cluster of schools which also provides access to training. Strong links have been made with the local secondary school as well as with sporting groups, a theatre group and the historical society.
 - Parents have very positive views of the school and almost all parents who responded to Parent View said that they would recommend the school. They say that they are made to feel welcome and are confident to approach teachers if they are concerned about anything.
 - Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are secure.
 - The local authority provides an appropriate range of support to the school.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors take their roles seriously. They have attended training which has helped them to understand what the data are telling them about achievement. They know the school well from the regular visits they make and recently they took part in a review of the school undertaken by the local authority. This enabled them to check that the school was judging its effectiveness accurately and gave them first-hand knowledge about the quality of teaching. They know how good teachers are rewarded by progression through the pay scale and how underperformance is tackled. They monitor spending, including whether the funding from pupil premium is being spent wisely. The current large number of vacancies on the governing body means that governors' ability to hold leaders to account is reduced. They are aware of this and are working with the diocese to recruit more foundation governors.
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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	116394
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	424062

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	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joe O’Gorman
Headteacher	Carol McIvor
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 March 2009
Telephone number	02392 583979
Email address	admin@st-marysrc-pri.hants.sch.uk

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