

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Webbs Wood Road, Bradley Stoke, Bristol, BS32 8EJ

**Inspection dates** 8–9 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	<b>1</b>
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- The headteacher has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. She communicates the highest of expectations.
- Individuals and groups of pupils achieve well and some make outstanding progress.
- Teaching is good. The school is providing many opportunities for staff to improve their teaching further and achieve its vision to be outstanding.
- The school is a calm and welcoming place. Pupils behave well, feel safe and are polite and considerate. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of a high quality.
- The headteacher and other leaders, including governors, are proud of their school and its achievements. They provide high quality care, guidance and support for pupils.
- Teachers, parents and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- More teaching needs to be outstanding. On occasions, expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. At times work is not always sufficiently challenging and some pupils are not always clear on what they need to do, which leads to the pace of learning slowing.
- Development plans and monitoring information are not always explicit in measuring the impact of outcomes to ensure all pupils are making rapid and sustained progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons taught by seven teachers. Seven of these observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers with subject leader responsibility, members of the governing body, pupils and the school improvement advisor. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the start of the school day and visited the breakfast club.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of school documentation including: information on pupils' achievement; the school's self-evaluation and development plan; minutes of meetings; records relating to the monitoring of teaching, behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors took account of 37 responses to the on-line Parent View survey and 17 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Simon Rowe, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ken Buxton

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Mary's is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher is at the school and a new Chair of the Governing Body has been appointed.
- The majority of pupils are from White British heritage. The proportions of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language are both above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and pupils with a parent or carer in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school met the government's floor standard, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress, in 2012.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has received many awards including an International School Award, the Eco School's silver award and the Royal Horticultural Society's bronze award.

### What does the school need to do to improve further

- Further strengthen the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good and more is outstanding by ensuring:
  - teachers always have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - all lessons proceed at a good pace with planned activities that motivate and challenge pupils of all abilities
  - pupils routinely understand what they are required to do so that learning time is maximised.
- Ensure development plans and monitoring information include measureable outcomes to determine that all pupils are making rapid and sustained progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children typically join the Reception class with skills and knowledge above the levels expected nationally for their age. In recent years, the make-up of these cohorts has varied considerably with some children entering school below typical levels. The school manages the transition from home to Reception well and pupils enter the school ready to learn. Children make good progress during the year and enter Year 1 well prepared for learning.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This indicates good progress for most pupils and outstanding progress for some.
- In 2012, Year 6 pupils' mathematics performance dipped. The school has worked hard to rectify this issue through developing pupils' mental mathematics strategies and implementing a new calculations policy. As a result, achievement in mathematics rose significantly in 2013 with over half of the Year 6 pupils attaining Level 5 or above in the end of Key Stage 2 assessments.
- Achievement across year groups is not always consistent. Pupils made less progress in Year 1 and Year 4 last year. The school are fully aware of these issues and have implemented strategies to rectify them. There are signs that these strategies are having a positive impact.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium attain less well than their peers but the school's intervention strategies are helping to narrow the gap between them.
- There is a strong focus on literacy throughout the curriculum. Pupils receive extra support where necessary, some of which is provided through extra funding received for pupils eligible for the pupil premium. There are a variety of interventions including one-to-one and targeted tuition from teaching assistants. These provisions are monitored effectively to ensure pupils are making accelerated progress.
- The most able pupils achieve well and the proportions attaining a Level 5 and Level 6 are high in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are effectively supported and achieve similarly to their peers. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, are well supported and they attain well.
- Phonics is taught effectively and pupils use these skills to decode and pronounce new words correctly. Pupils indicate that they enjoy reading and their progress in this is evident in the key stage examination outcomes.

### The quality of teaching is good

- There have been many changes to the teaching staff since the last inspection. Evidence gathered from lesson observations and reading pupils' work confirms that teaching is typically good. There are examples of outstanding teaching.
- In the best lessons, teachers plan a variety of activities, which support and challenge pupils of all abilities. Lessons proceed at a good pace and pupils are given opportunities to explore their learning and to work independently and with their peers. Literacy and

numeracy skills are developed at every opportunity. For example, in an outstanding mathematics lesson, pupils worked in groups to solve complex word questions linked to a supermarket price list. They showed great resilience when solving challenging problems. They enjoyed discussing their thoughts and ideas with each other. Their challenging questions demonstrated a clear understanding of the key concepts they had been studying.

- Pupils enjoy school. They exhibit positive attitudes to learning and relationships are strong. Teachers use questioning effectively to probe pupils' understanding and to deepen their learning.
- Work in books is usually well presented and indicates good and better progress over time. Assessment is on-going and books are marked regularly with many examples where pupils respond to their teachers' comments. Pupils also take responsibility for assessing their own learning by completing grids, which reference the levels at which they are working. This helps pupils know what they need to do to reach the next level.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed and work effectively alongside pupils to develop their learning.
- In lessons, where teaching requires improvement to be good, expectations are not high enough of what pupils are able to achieve and work is not well matched to individual's needs. This limits the progress pupils make. Instructions of what pupils need to do are not clear enough and, when they settle down to work on their own, the rate of learning slows.
- Pupils agree that teaching is good.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- There is a positive ethos in, and around, the school. Pupils are typically polite and courteous and are proud of their school. They conduct themselves well during the day, including at break and lunch times. In discussion, pupils say they feel safe and understand how to keep themselves safe.
- Where teaching is good and better, pupils exhibit positive attitudes to learning. Relationships between pupils and their teachers and each other are strong. They work well independently and with their peers.
- In lessons where pupils are not suitably challenged, they occasionally lose concentration, become and there is some low level disruption. The school has taken firm action to address this through its 'good to be green' behaviour initiative. This approach is successfully enabling pupils to take personal responsibility for their behaviour.
- The school provides regular opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of the different types of bullying. Pupils speak confidently when describing bullying incidents as being rare. They say that if an incident does happen, they have an adult that they can talk to and that the school deals with it quickly.
- Attendance has risen and is now above average. The proportions of pupils who do not attend school regularly has decreased and are below average.
- Most parents agree that the school ensures its pupils are well behaved.

**The leadership and management are good**

- Following her appointment, the headteacher has quickly gained an accurate overview of the school's strengths and areas for development. She communicates the highest of expectations and has prioritised improving and strengthening the quality of teaching further so that it becomes outstanding, as the school's main priority.
- As a result of recent staffing changes, the school has reorganised its senior leadership team and changed the subject leader for mathematics. Although these appointments have been recently made, the senior leadership team is providing a good level of support to the headteacher.
- All staff that responded to the staff questionnaire agreed that the school is well led and managed. One member of staff wrote, 'I feel that I am well supported in my role and am part of a team.'
- Many new initiatives have been implemented and are beginning to bring about improvements but these will need more time to embed fully. There is a need, though, for plans and monitoring information to include measurable outcomes to determine that all pupils are making rapid and sustained progress.
- The headteacher uses the school's performance management processes well to hold staff at all levels to account. Teachers' targets are linked closely to the teachers' standards and to the progress pupils make.
- Teaching is good and senior leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching in the school. The senior leaders have developed a clear plan to improve the quality of teaching by utilising the best practitioners in school to support others. During the inspection, inspectors carried out a number of joint observations with the headteacher. She has a very clear understanding of what constitutes good teaching and her judgements were in line with those of the inspectors.
- Target setting is rigorous and aspirational. Leaders and managers track the progress of pupils and groups of pupils carefully. Intervention is timely and effective.
- The quality of care, guidance and support is of a high standard. Staff visit each child at home with their family to introduce themselves, prior to entry to the Reception class, and to meet the child in a familiar environment. The visit also helps to develop a positive relationship with each family. The school also has a parent link and learning mentor service. This is where parents can drop-in and speak to an advisor if they have any concerns regarding their child.
- The curriculum meets the range of pupils' needs and interests. Extra-curricular provision is extensive. Pupils rightly value this and utilise it fully. There is a breakfast club which runs each morning. This provides pupils with a calm start to the day and with a healthy breakfast, which prepares them well for learning.
- The school's distinctive Catholic ethos ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is strong. Pupils enjoy and actively participate in assemblies.
- The focused theme weeks, which are organised as special events throughout the year provide an exciting and interesting extension to the curriculum. The school recently held an international evening, which provided an opportunity for families to visit school and share their cultures through story-telling and cooking. Science is also an important part of the school's curriculum and the school is able to enhance pupils' experience of this subject through its links with local companies.
- The school has developed appropriate plans to use its extra government funding to extend the range of activities available to thereby enhance physical education across all year groups.

- The school communicates regular information to parents regarding their child's progress. There is an 'open door' policy and parents commented that there was always someone available to talk to them.
- The local authority school improvement advisor supports the school well.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements and gives no cause for concern.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body are becomingly increasingly aware of the school's strengths and areas of development. Governors are aligning themselves to specific classes to deepen their understanding of the school and this is enabling them to become more challenging about the quality of teaching across the school. They do not always receive reports from subject leaders that explain the level of detail needed so that they can hold leaders fully to account for the achievement of pupils. They take care to oversee that the school's finances are well managed and the extra government funding is being used appropriately.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131410
<b>Local authority</b>	South Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	427195

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary Aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	208
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Trevor Netto
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paula Marsh
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 – 6 March 2007
<b>Telephone number</b>	01454 866390
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