

# St Rose's Catholic Infants School

Green End Road, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 1QW

**Inspection dates** 5–6 November 2013

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

- Pupils across the school make consistently good progress and reach standards that are significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make rapid progress in learning to read, write and use mathematics. As a result, by the time they join Year 1, most exceed the levels usual at this age.
- Teaching is good and teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of their pupils' work and behaviour.
- All staff work closely together to ensure good support for all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. They are friendly and polite and take good care of one another. Pupils say that they feel very safe.
- The headteacher, along with the other leaders and governors, is successful in constantly driving for improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement across the school.
- The governors are highly focused on raising the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement further. They are confident to hold leaders to account for the school's performance.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always plan sufficiently demanding tasks that meet the learning needs of all groups of pupils, especially the more able.
- Marking does not always give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work, and even where the next steps for improvement are given, pupils do not always get the opportunity to take the action indicated.
- Subject leaders are not all yet fully involved in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their subjects.

### Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 12 lessons, of which three were seen together with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons and learning areas, and heard Year 2 pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, members of staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of 96 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 24 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' books and a range of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current attainment and progress, the school's evaluation of its performance, school improvement planning, documentation relating to teachers' performance over time and records relating to safeguarding.

### Inspection team

Tusha Chakraborti, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Douglas Folan

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized infant school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small proportion of pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which in this school provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is well-below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well-below average, as is the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The headteacher took up her post in April 2013.
- The school is part of the local primary and secondary schools consortium and collaborates with these partner schools to provide a range of training programmes for all staff.

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

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
  - ensuring that teachers consistently use assessment information to plan learning activities that match precisely the needs of all pupils, and always provide sufficient challenge for more-able learners
  - making sure that all pupils are given clear guidance as to the next steps in their learning, and that they are routinely given time to act upon the guidance.
- Strengthening the roles of subject leaders who are new to their roles by involving them more fully in the drive to improve teaching and pupils' achievement.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills and knowledge that are in line with the levels expected for their age and, in some cases, above the expected levels in personal, social, emotional and physical development. Staff have a good understanding of children's needs and plan a wide range of activities that enthuse and engage them well in their learning. As a result, children make good progress, and by the time they enter Year 1, many exceed typical levels of attainment in all areas of learning.
- Pupils continue to make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 and attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 in these subjects is significantly above average. Good progress is clearly evident in pupils' work over the past year and in the lessons observed during the inspection. However, some more-able pupils do not always achieve as well as they could because teachers do not always set sufficiently challenging tasks for them.
- From an early age, children enjoy reading and sharing books. Children in the Nursery and the Reception classes are confident in discussing their work and in expressing their views clearly. Their skills were observed, for example, in a Reception class where children were involved in making a plan for different celebrations, including birthday parties.
- The results of the Year 1 screening check on phonics (the sounds that letters make) were below average in 2012, but have improved significantly over the past year. The results were well-above average in 2013.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 apply their knowledge of phonics very effectively to pronounce unfamiliar words and confidently narrate the stories they read. They read fluently and have a good understanding of fiction and non-fiction texts. Many also write accurately and at length.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make equally good progress as their classmates because they receive very effective support from skilled teachers and teaching assistants.
- The small numbers of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding make good progress, attaining as well as the others in reading, writing and mathematics. The additional funding has been spent on staff who give carefully planned one-to-one or small-group support for pupils to ensure that none fall behind in learning. The gap in attainment between those eligible for the pupil premium and others across the school narrowed significantly during the last academic year and is, currently, insignificant.
- The progress and attainment of pupils who speak English as an additional language and those from different minority ethnic backgrounds are comparable to that of their classmates.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers and other staff provide a positive and purposeful learning environment, and relationships across the school are excellent. As a result, pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning. They say that 'work is sometimes hard but it is good because you learn more'.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, staff provide a rich and stimulating environment where

children feel secure to ask questions and engage in their learning. Children are given opportunities to pursue activities of their own choice, as well as those directed by adults, through a balanced indoor-and-outdoor programme of learning. They are helped to work independently and in groups, developing knowledge and skills rapidly in all areas of learning. This was demonstrated by groups of children making a birthday cake, counting candles and writing a birthday card.

- Teachers ask questions effectively to extend and challenge pupils' learning, developing thinking skills well. In most lessons, teachers systematically check pupils' understanding of what they have learnt and intervene effectively to move them on to the next stage.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They focus well on improving pupils' writing and mathematical skills through a range of interesting activities. Pupils in a Year 2 lesson, for example, were observed exploring properties of two-dimensional shapes, successfully grouping them according to their characteristics.
- Pupils have good opportunities to write at length for different purposes, for example, diaries and historical events, such as 'The Great Fire of London'. Reading sessions with small groups are used well to deepen pupils' understanding of stories, analysing the impact of key events and characters.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers in planning and delivering lessons. They are skilled and were seen to provide effective support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those who are supported by the pupil premium.
- Teachers do not always use the information about pupils' progress effectively enough to plan tasks that are accurately matched to the learning needs of all pupils. When this occurs, opportunities are missed to extend the skills and understanding of all groups of pupils, particularly those of higher-ability pupils.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but do not always include guidance on how to improve it. In some cases, the next steps that pupils should take to improve their work are suggested but they are not given time to respond, so they repeat the same mistakes.

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

- Pupils' behaviour is good. They respond well to the school's positive approach to behaviour and grow as confident learners. Pupils say they like to work because they 'learn new things'. In a small minority of lessons, where teaching is not sufficiently challenging, pupils lose focus and there are some low levels of disruption.
- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy learning. They are polite and welcoming both in class and around the school. Excellent relationships between the staff and pupils promote a culture of mutual respect where pupils feel valued. Such constructive relationships contribute well to the school's determination to include every pupil, equally, in gaining from the many learning opportunities available.
- Pupils say they feel very safe at school. They have a good understanding of various types of safety issues such as internet safety, fire and road safety. They say that incidents of bullying are rare, and are confident that adults deal with them fairly and effectively. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire thought that pupils' behaviour is excellent, and that their children feel safe at school at all times.

- Pupils take on roles of responsibility. For example, older pupils support the children in the Nursery and Reception classes, being their 'buddy'. They suggest school improvement through 'pupil voice' and arrange fundraising activities to support their selected charities.
- Attendance is average but improving. The headteacher has ended the previous policy for authorising holidays during term time. Such absence is now registered, correctly, as unauthorised. This action is beginning to improve the rate of attendance, as evident in the current year.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher, together with other leaders and governors, communicates high expectations of what pupils should achieve. Staff at all levels work together as a cohesive team to improve achievement and teaching. All show high levels of commitment to the school's priorities.
- The subject leaders who are new to their roles are not, as yet, fully involved in checking the quality of teaching or guiding improvement in their subjects. However, there is strong focus on developing the roles of these leaders to ensure high achievement.
- The quality of teaching is regularly checked and challenging targets are set for staff to ensure higher standards of achievement for the pupils they teach. The headteacher manages the performance of staff well, and there are clear links between pupils' progress and staff pay and promotion.
- Staff and governors have a very clear and highly accurate view of the quality of teaching and of pupils' progress. This information is used well to sustain the school's good work and to secure further improvements in teaching and the achievement of all pupils. Leaders work together to produce and evaluate the impact of the actions taken to raise pupils' achievement. However, assessment information on pupils' progress and levels of attainment are not always used well enough in planning of learning activities for all abilities.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed effectively. Consequently, the quality of teaching has improved in Nursery and Reception since the previous inspection.
- A well-organised curriculum provides good opportunities for many enjoyable learning experiences for all groups of pupils to which they respond well. Visits to places of interest and a range of clubs and events in school make pupils' learning meaningful. These activities, along with assemblies and the study of different religions, promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The school employs a sports specialist to enhance opportunities for pupils to develop their sporting skills further through the additional funding for sport and physical education. It is too early to assess the impact of the funding at this stage.
- The local authority has provided effective support to the school and the headteacher through the monitoring of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The school engages well with parents. They are positive about all aspects of the school's work. The parents' association was very supportive in developing the school's woodlands area.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors provide good leadership and support the school well. They have a clear understanding of how well pupils are progressing and the effectiveness of teaching. They have

been fully involved in the school's action to improve achievement and teaching. They are aware of the results pupils attain in national tests and how they compare nationally. They, supported by the local authority, have set challenging objectives for the newly appointed headteacher. They understand how each member of staff is paid according to performance in enabling pupils to make progress. Governors challenge leaders and ask searching questions about how any underperformance is tackled. They ensure that the income received through the pupil premium is used for the purposes intended and check the impact on pupils' progress. The governing body ensures that the national requirements for safeguarding and safe recruitment of staff are met.

## 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>	117484
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	425414

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	199
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Abi Whittacker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rebecca Tregear
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 July 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01442 398855
<b>Fax number</b>	01442 398 835
<b>Email address</b>	admin@stroses.herts.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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

