

St Mary's CofE Primary School

Cornhill Road, Davyhulme, Urmston, Manchester, M41 5TJ

Inspection dates 19–20 November 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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Achievement is not yet good. The progress pupils make as they move through the school is uneven.
- In English, too few pupils make more than expected progress from their starting points or reach the higher levels of attainment. The quality of their writing is hampered by their handwriting and the accuracy of their spelling.
- Teaching is not consistently good across the school. The needs of groups of pupils of differing ability are not always sufficiently taken into account in teachers' planning, particularly those of the more able. Pupils therefore sometimes find tasks too easy or too difficult.
- Pupils are not always given precise enough guidance about how to improve their work.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to apply their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Subject leaders are not all fully involved in checking and driving improvement in the quality of teaching. Good and outstanding practice in the school is therefore not spread rapidly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher provides clear direction. Senior leaders and governors have acted decisively and successfully to raise standards and improve achievement.
- Standards in mathematics have risen to well above average and pupils make good progress. This is a clear indication of the school's capacity to improve further.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of good teaching.
- Pupils enjoy reading and read with increasing fluency and understanding.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils have very good relationships with each other and with adults in the school. They have positive attitudes towards their learning, are proud of their school and are keen to do well. They feel safe in school. Attendance is above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons, including short visits to other activities led by teachers and trained assistants. These included eight joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils from Key Stages 1 and 2. Discussions were held with staff, including senior leaders and those responsible for leading subjects. Meetings were conducted with the Chair of the Governing Body and with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 36 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and letters from parents and 11 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors analysed pupils' work in books with the senior leadership team and read a range of documents. These included information on the school's own evaluation of its performance, improvement plans, pupils' current progress and policies and records on safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Judith Tolley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lyn Field

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mary's is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority and children of service families) is much lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is higher than average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in staff. The headteacher took up her post in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring teachers plan activities that precisely meet the needs of all pupils, particularly to provide an appropriate level of challenge for the more able
 - making sure that less-able pupils are always given the right resources to be able to complete tasks successfully without help from adults
 - ensuring pupils are always given good written guidance so that they know precisely how they can improve their work, particularly their handwriting and spelling
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to think for themselves, to explain their working or thinking to other pupils and to work together to solve problems.
- Raise attainment and increase the rate of progress further in English by providing pupils with more opportunities to apply their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on improving pupils' achievement by ensuring subject leaders work closely with teachers so that they spread good practice more quickly across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The progress pupils make as they move through the school is uneven, particularly in writing, and requires improvement.
- Over the last three years, standards in English have fluctuated and in 2012, they dipped to below average but pupils' progress is now speeding up, particularly in reading. By the end of Year 6, standards in English are above average overall. Pupils make expected progress, but too few make good progress from their individual starting points.
- This is because the progress pupils make, especially in writing, is uneven as they move through the school. They make rapid gains particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6, but their progress is less secure in other years. The accuracy of their spelling and their handwriting severely hampers their achievement. There have been significant improvements in Key Stage 2 over the last year but there are still variations between groups, especially in writing.
- After a dip in 2012, achievement in mathematics improved rapidly in 2013. Standards are now well above average. More pupils are now reaching the higher levels of attainment than previously. Most make the progress expected from their starting points and the proportion of pupils making better than expected progress compares favourably with national figures.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. The youngest are able to apply their knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) successfully to read and write simple sentences. From the outset, they read with interest and clearly enjoy their reading so that by the end of Year 6 most now read a variety of texts with a good level of fluency and understanding. Most are able to talk in detail about what they have read, empathise with characters in stories, make inferences and read for information.
- Many pupils enter the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are in line with those typically expected for their age. Children make good progress overall and in some aspects of their learning, such as communication, language, reading and writing they make outstanding progress. The majority enter Year 1 with skills that are above those expected for their age.
- The school is committed to ensuring all pupils have equal opportunities. Pupils with special educational needs are making better progress than their peers as the result of the extra help with English and mathematics and one-to-one support in lessons they receive, which is well tailored to their individual needs.
- Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding, including those eligible for free school meals, also make better progress than their peers as a result of the extra help they are given. Work seen during the inspection and the school's analysis of progress indicate that the extra support that the school is providing with this funding now enables these pupils to reach their targets. Gaps between the performances of different groups, including those receiving this funding are closing.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is too variable across the school. The quality of teaching over time requires improvement. Although good and outstanding practice was observed, it is in pockets. Evidence from the school's own records, from the analysis of pupils' work and from joint observations made by inspectors and school leaders shows that the quality of teaching is not consistently good or better. Pupils' progress, as they move through the school, is, therefore, uneven.
- In some lessons, pupils' progress is slowed because planning does not take enough account of their varying individual needs. In particular, the level of challenge provided for the more-able pupils is not great enough to enable them to achieve their full potential. Less-able pupils sometimes rely too heavily upon direct help from the teacher or teaching assistants to tackle tasks confidently on their own or the expectations teachers have of them are too low.

- Pupils' work is marked regularly and there are instances of excellent practice within the school. However, the quality of marking varies too much between the classes. It does not always give pupils the precise guidance they need to improve, particularly their writing. Marking does not always pick up errors in spelling so pupils continue to make the same mistakes. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are not always given enough guidance about how to improve their handwriting or how to apply the phonics they have learned accurately. Not all pupils respond to teachers' comments and improve upon the work they have done. The information gained through marking about pupils' understanding does not always inform lesson planning sufficiently to ensure pupils make the progress they should.
- Pupils respond well to opportunities to work together with enthusiasm, especially when tasks involve problem solving. For instance, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils rapidly worked out the squares and square roots of numbers and were able to set problems for their partners to solve.
- In the Reception class, teachers make effective use of assessments about what children know and can do to plan their next steps in learning. In activities led by adults, children make good progress and further develop their literacy and numeracy skills at a good rate when they learn through independent play. For instance, children were keen to identify the 2D and 3D shapes they were using to make models of owls, make prints and construct towers and tracks following a mathematics lesson they had had.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils are sometimes prevented from thinking things through for themselves and taking the initiative to show they can learn on their own. This is because teachers are sometimes too ready to guide them or provide the answers for them. When pupils are given the opportunity to explain their working or their thinking to others, they do so clearly and accurately but they are not always given the opportunity to do this.
- Some teaching is outstanding. This is where assessment information is used very effectively to plan activities and provide a level of challenge which accurately meets pupils' needs and enables them to make rapid progress. Skilful questioning coupled with frequent opportunities for pupils to solve problems for themselves leads to a significant improvement in the progress they make as well as increasing their confidence and independence. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, for instance, pupils were keen to work out possible solutions for a word problem and were encouraged to check their ideas using inverse operations and to learn from their mistakes. This they did with great enthusiasm and interest.
- Arrangements for the teaching of early reading in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 meet the needs of groups of differing ability well. This is having a positive impact upon pupils' achievement. Projects such as the staging of *A Christmas Carol* and *Romeo and Juliet* in Years 5 and 6 have led to significant improvements in pupils' confidence and enthusiasm for reading.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour around the school is good. They are polite and courteous and keen to talk about their school and how much they enjoy it. Attendance has improved year-on-year and is above average. In the playground they play well together, take good care of equipment and use their initiative to organise activities at lunchtimes.
- Pupils and parents say they feel safe and they value the good relationships they have with their teachers and with each other.
- In lessons, pupils are keen to learn and to do well. When working with a partner, they work together sensibly, organise themselves well and help one another. They take on responsibility, for example, as playground leaders and helpers, with enthusiasm. They regularly help younger pupils in the playground and around the school and take their role as buddies very seriously. They are proud of their contribution to the school, for instance as school councillors and ambassadors, and are excited about their ideas for improving the playground.
- Pupils have a good understanding and awareness of different types of bullying, including cyber-

bullying. They are confident that any poor behaviour is usually dealt with promptly and effectively.

- Pupils understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and speak enthusiastically about opportunities to take part in sports and other extra-curricular activities. They are aware of the benefits this provides for their physical and personal well-being.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because subject leaders are not fully involved in checking and driving improvement in the quality of teaching across the school. This means that best practice is not shared quickly enough to ensure that it is consistently good.
- The senior leadership team has an accurate view of the school's performance because it tracks pupils' progress against their targets accurately and carefully.
- The headteacher has been in post for a very short time but has a good understanding of what needs to be done and has already begun to tackle weaknesses. She is strongly supported by the senior leadership team and together they provide very clear direction. The impact of resolute leadership and management over the last year is evident not only in improved achievement in mathematics but also in the very positive ethos in the school. Together, senior leaders have secured important improvements in the quality of teaching, the curriculum and systems to track pupils' progress and hold teachers to account.
- Procedures have recently been introduced to ensure that the quality of teaching of each member of staff is regularly reviewed. The outcomes are used to secure appropriate training to benefit their professional development, as well as to consider any advancement in pay. The information gathered from observing lessons is used to identify training needs, linked closely to whole-school improvement planning.
- The curriculum adequately provides for pupils to learn all required subjects. However, pupils do not always get enough opportunity to practise their writing skills in subjects other than English or to write at length. The curriculum is enriched by a variety of activities, wide range of clubs, sporting activities, visits and visitors to extend learning beyond normal lessons. First-hand experience and links with the wider community are particularly effective in developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and promote a genuine interest and concern for others.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the school during a period where there have been significant changes of staff and this has enabled the school to remain on an even keel and to secure improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have provided good support for the school during a period of considerable turbulence and change. They have a good understanding of how the school is doing and what it needs to do to improve further. They make sure that pupils and staff are safe by securing effective safeguarding arrangements. Governors understand how pupil premium funding is spent. They make sure that some of the grant is used to pay for extra staffing to improve the pupils' achievement in English and mathematics and have an accurate view of its impact upon pupils' achievement. They have a clear understanding of how sports funding is to be spent and are keen to ensure this provides a lasting legacy. Governors are involved in monitoring the performance of the headteacher and setting her relevant targets and they are also aware of the performance of teaching staff. Finances are managed with care and the budget closely controlled.

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	106349
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	433173

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	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Edgar
Headteacher	Anita Fagan
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2010
Telephone number	0161 912 2728
Fax number	0161 749 7719
Email address	stmarysdavy.admin@trafford.gov.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. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email 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, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: 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.

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
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

