

# St Mary Magdalene CofE Primary School

Stanway Road, West Bromwich, B71 1RP

**Inspection dates** 22–23 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Levels of attainment and rates of progress are rising rapidly from Nursery to Year 6, particularly in writing, where pupils strive to produce a 'Paragraph of Perfection'.
- Most teaching across the school is outstanding and never less than consistently good. Tasks are fun and exciting and based on real life situations, engaging pupils' interest and making them want to learn more.
- The curriculum enables pupils to develop their basic skills through a series of exciting topics. This has been a key feature in ensuring the rising pattern of achievement.
- Behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Older pupils enjoy supporting younger ones around the school. Pupils say that they feel very safe because they are well known and cared for by all adults.
- The school is rigorous in ensuring that all pupils, especially those facing challenging circumstances, are safe and able to thrive.
- The headteacher, closely supported by her deputy, the governors and wider team, has been relentless in driving improvements in every area of the school's work. Their attention to detail and high expectations of both pupils and staff have led to exceptional advances since the previous inspection. They show an outstanding capacity to sustain these improvements.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, ten of which were jointly observed with one of the school’s senior leaders. They also made several short visits to lessons together with leaders.
- Meetings were held with pupils, parents, a representative of the Sandwell Behaviour Support Team, members of the governing body and staff, including subject leaders. A telephone conversation took place with the local authority’s improvement partner.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of documents including policies, development plans, monitoring records, information about pupils’ progress, safeguarding information and samples of pupils’ work.
- The views of 15 parents and carers who responded to the school’s questionnaire were considered (Parent View). In addition, the schools’ own survey of parents’ views and 27 responses to the staff questionnaire were taken into account.

## Inspection team

Mary Davis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Edgar Hastings

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average, with the largest group having speech, language and communication needs.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is high with the largest groups being of Indian or Other Asian heritage. An above average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language with some, newly arrived, at an early stage of learning English.
- An above average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for looked after pupils and those known to be eligible for free school meals).
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

- Improve the consistency of good handwriting across all subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children join the Nursery class with skills, knowledge and understanding that are typically well below the levels expected for their age and join the Reception class below expectations. Children in current classes are now making rapid progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage, developing good learning and listening skills, preparing them well for Key Stage 1.
- Current pupils in Key Stage 1 started the key stage with below average basic skills. By the end of Year 2, levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics have risen steadily over recent years and in 2013 were broadly average. High quality teaching is ensuring that, by the end of the current academic year, attainment is set to rise further in all subjects and with an above average proportion of more-able pupils reaching the higher level 3.
- Results of Key Stage 2 national tests have also shown a rising trend, particularly in mathematics where recent results show that attainment is well above average. Secure assessments indicate that an above average proportion of the current Year 6 cohort will attain expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion attaining the higher level 5 in these subjects is also predicted to be above average. A high proportion of pupils are already working at level 4, halfway through the year, particularly in reading where nearly all pupils are predicted to reach the expected level for their age. There is no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls, pupils from different ethnic backgrounds or pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The 2013 national test information shows that the proportion of pupils making and exceeding expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics was above national figures although progress in writing was not as strong. High quality teaching and leadership of literacy, has ensured that this has been thoroughly addressed since September and therefore rates of progress have risen dramatically, including that of the most able pupils. This is exemplified by pupils' enthusiasm to try to produce a 'Paragraph of Perfection' (POP) which has to be grammatically correct and with correct spelling. These are displayed weekly and celebrated with 'POP Parties,' generating great excitement.
- Leaders have recently introduced a similarly exciting handwriting scheme which has yet to embed fully across the school. This includes earning a 'pen license' as an incentive for neatness.
- The gap between the attainment of pupils eligible for additional funding and their peers varies year on year. A high proportion of this group often have special educational needs. This was the case in 2013 when these pupils were two terms behind their classmates in mathematics and English. In 2012, there was no gap in attainment in these subjects. Leaders check on this group of pupils with extreme thoroughness ensuring that they make good progress.
- All pupils enjoy reading. Right from the start children learn how to sound out words and are confident to 'have a go' at reading unfamiliar text. An above-average proportion of pupils achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonic screening check. Systematic support to develop pupils' reading skills continues throughout the school. Teachers' high expectations of pupils' use of language means that even the youngest children use a wide range of vocabulary.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make rapid progress as a result of the specialist support they receive. They are very well supported in lessons by both their class teachers and by high quality teaching assistants, so that they are able to achieve their potential. The pupils who speak English as an additional language, some at an early stage, are

similarly well supported and achieve well. Key to this rapid progress is the rich curriculum which enables pupils to understand what they need to do to achieve as well as they can. This approach has had a considerable impact on boosting the confidence and self-esteem of lower attaining pupils.

### **The quality of teaching** is outstanding

- Teaching has improved dramatically since the last inspection because the headteacher has been relentless in the promotion of, and insistence on, high quality teaching and learning. Teachers have responded with a clear determination to improve and, as a result, all the teaching observed during the inspection was at least strongly good, but the large majority was outstanding.
- Pupils in all year groups greatly enjoy their lessons. Inspectors observed Year 3 pupils showing great excitement at labelling the large triangles stuck to the classroom floor. They used post-it notes to label them correctly having used a protractor to measure them. This is an example of how all teachers include an opportunity for pupils to have fun, working with their friends, despite the lack of space in some classrooms. Pupils frequently experience tasks that are fun and engaging.
- Teaching assistants are a real strength of the school and ably lead groups in activities so that all pupils are fully included and learn successfully.
- Teachers use questioning skilfully to encourage pupils' deeper thinking about their learning. For example, in a Year 4 numeracy lesson, pupils used a variety of resources to discover the properties of triangles. The teacher constantly asked them to prove and demonstrate their answers. Pupils showed pride in their achievement, one being heard to say, 'I love scalene triangles!'

Teachers engage pupils' interest by making activities fun and relevant to their experience and interests. Resources enhance their learning. For example, Year 5 pupils were observed showing great enjoyment researching the Victorians. Activities included learning how to sew in preparation for making a sampler; researching Victorian fashion; and using fractions to calculate price reductions in a Victorian shop.

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage engenders a love of learning through such topics as 'super heroes'. All areas of learning are well planned so that children build their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and social skills.
- Assessment is strong throughout the school. Teachers know their pupils well and are quick to adapt their plans if pupils find a task too easy or too difficult. Pupils are very clear on how to achieve their targets and they take pride in identifying how well they are doing. Marking is consistently of a high quality. 'Gap tasks' are provided to enable pupils to have time to respond to teachers' comments by trying a new challenge or editing work.

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

- 'Love to learn; learn to love' is the school's motto which is well known by the pupils. They show great enthusiasm for their learning in all lessons where the behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Relationships between pupils and adults are warm and, from an early age, pupils work well together, cooperating on tasks and discussing their learning. They are very polite and respectful to adults, showing good manners.

- Round the school older pupils take roles of responsibility as they guide or support younger ones, for example holding their hands as they walk to the church, or holding doors open and encouraging them to walk quietly and calmly.
- Staff are skilled at managing a range of behaviour and leaders have ensured that strategies and support for those pupils with behavioural difficulties are fully embedded. As a result, the behaviour of these pupils has been seen to improve over time.
- An external review of lunchtime behaviour, at the headteacher's request, has led to lunchtime staff being given training, the provision of quiet areas and the reward for good behaviour. This has all resulted in pupils experiencing happy and supportive leisure time. Parents and staff agree with inspectors that that pupils' behaviour is outstanding.
- Pupils told inspectors that the school keeps them very safe and parents and staff agree. All adults know pupils well and show great care, for example, by noticing when a pupil is unhappy and encouraging those who lack confidence. Adults lead by example with the result that the school is warm and caring.
- Although pupils show a clear understanding of what constitutes bullying and what to do if they should experience cyber-bullying, they say that any bullying is very rare and that the school provides instant support if they are upset in any way.
- The school goes to great lengths to ensure that those pupils and their families facing challenging circumstances are very well supported. This includes sign-posting parents to external support. The parent support advisor is instrumental in this. The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- The importance of good attendance is constantly stressed with pupils and their parents and, as a result, attendance rates are consistently above average.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The headteacher has been relentless in her drive for improvement. She is very well supported by her deputy, her senior team and by the governing body. Together there has been no stone left unturned in ensuring that every policy is fully implemented and every small detail has been attended to. The school's clear view of its own performance and well focused development planning has resulted in all issues raised by the previous inspection being rigorously and successfully addressed. All aspects of the school's work are now outstanding.
- The drive to improve the quality of teaching has included a continuous cycle of observing teaching. Good practice is shared by teachers so that they are able to observe and support each other and further develop their skills.
- Procedures for tracking pupils' progress across the school are highly effective. The meticulous analysis of pupil performance ensures equal opportunities for all. Teachers are held closely to account for the achievement of their pupils.
- Subject and other middle leaders promote creativity and teamwork. The local authority has provided effective additional support in building leadership skills.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed, ensuring that effective partnerships with parents are quickly established and that activities are well planned that promote children's independence. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well equipped and resourced although the

lack of covering prevents full use of the outside area in poor weather.

- Key to the rapid rise in achievement has been the new approach to the curriculum. This has enabled pupils to build their literacy and numeracy skills in a realistic and exciting way, incorporating the study of all subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils are making exceptional progress exploring a forensic science topic. They were observed writing persuasive letters to the judge explaining why they thought a character was guilty. They discussed the case in depth and made use of an impressive range of evidence to support their judgements. The pupils' approach to learning, their great excitement and maturity, all contribute positively to their spiritual, moral social and cultural development.
- Opportunities for art, drama, sport and music are many and varied, including the opportunity to learn a musical instrument or sing in the choir at Birmingham's Arena. The primary sports funding is used very effectively, for example, to provide opportunities for pupils to exercise with their parents and to promote competition. Close partnership with the church further promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils of all faiths are fully included in assemblies.
- The school involves parents and families closely in its work. An open door policy ensures that minor worries are dealt with immediately and staff are always available at the start and end of the day. Workshops, assemblies and the invitation to observe the 'stunning starts' and 'fabulous finishes' to the 'irresistible' learning topics, enables them to be fully involved in their child's learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is very well organised and led. Governors have been rigorous in ensuring that they check on all aspects of the school's work. They know the school well and have an in-depth understanding of how well it is performing compared with other schools. They have sought appropriate training and continually question and challenge the school's leaders and make frequent visits to see at first-hand how the school is doing. Governors know the strengths and areas for development in teaching and ensure that good performance leads to appropriate salary progression. They check thoroughly that additional funding is used appropriately and is leading to the gap in achievement closing between all groups of pupils. They ensure that safeguarding and health and safety practices are exemplary.

## 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>	103989
<b>Local authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	431130

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 controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	231
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andrew Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ruth Gillett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 March 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 5882371
<b>Fax number</b>	0121 5888454
<b>Email address</b>	ruth.gillett@st-marymagdalene.sandwell.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 2014

