

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

High Street, Evesham, WR11 4EJ

Inspection dates 12–13 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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

- Standards are above average and pupils achieve well, especially in reading and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is good, and at times outstanding.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught well and make good progress.
- The progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language is good because their needs are catered for well.
- Pupils enjoy their school. They behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils feel safe in school.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- School leaders including governors work very well as a team. They ensure that pupils achieve well and that teaching is consistently good. The school continues to get better.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' attainment in writing is not as good as it is in reading and mathematics.
- There is not enough outstanding teaching. Marking is not always effective in showing pupils how to improve their work.
- Pupils do not yet transfer their good spelling, punctuation and grammar skills to other writing tasks. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write at length in other subjects.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching do not always focus closely enough on pupils' progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons, of which two were seen jointly with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of the 45 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View).
- Twenty-nine staff completed questionnaires and the responses were analysed.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and school leaders.
- Inspectors looked at many documents, including: the school's own information on pupils' current and recent progress; planning of work in different subjects; leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and the safeguarding of pupils.

Inspection team

Steve Nelson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Deirdre Lyddy	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. The proportion who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding to assist certain groups, which in this school applies to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals) is well below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expected nationally for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to practise their writing at length across subjects
 - ensuring that pupils transfer their good spelling, punctuation and grammar when they are writing for different purposes or audiences
 - making sure that teachers' marking clearly shows pupils how to improve their work and that pupils use the advice in subsequent work
 - ensuring that observations of teaching have a greater focus on the progress of pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- In the 2013 National Curriculum tests and assessments in Year 6, pupils' achievement in English and mathematics was good. Attainment has risen steadily over the last three years. It was above average in reading and mathematics and slightly below in writing last year. The proportion of pupils meeting the nationally expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national figures and the proportions exceeding this compared well with national figures in reading and mathematics. Pupils working in the current Year 6 are making good progress and are on track to exceed national expectations in all areas by the end of the year.
- Attainment in Year 2 dipped last year. The school's data show that this is not repeated in other year groups. This was because about a third of these pupils who joined Year 1 and Year 2 were working below, and a few well below, expected levels for their age. Nevertheless, school data show that these and the other pupils made good progress from their starting points.
- The majority of children start in Reception with skills that are below and in some cases well below those typical for their age, particularly in communication and language. Children make good progress because teachers carefully plan activities to hold their interest and which stretch them. They enter Year 1 as confident learners.
- Reading is a regular feature in each class and there is excitement about reading among pupils. They tackle new words with confidence and understand what they are reading and use these skills in other subjects well. Pupils are skilled in numeracy, have good knowledge of number facts and enjoy solving practical problems in mathematics.
- Standards in writing have improved, especially pupils' ability to spell correctly and use punctuation and grammar accurately when completing exercises. However, they do not always use these sufficiently well in their own writing.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well. This is because the school provides effective support that enables them, where necessary, to catch up with other pupils and in some cases reach higher standards. An increasing proportion of the more-able pupils are reaching higher levels in their work, particularly in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs across the school make good progress as a result of the extra help they receive. The school acts quickly to support pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Good teaching, together with well-tailored and planned literacy and numeracy support, is very effective in speeding up their progress.
- There are only a few pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium in each class but they achieve well. They make similar progress from their starting points to other pupils in English and mathematics. It is not possible to comment on their attainment in detail without identifying individual pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching ensures pupils achieve well over time including those who need extra help. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive; as a result, pupils work hard and have good attitudes towards their learning.

- Children have plenty of exciting resources in Reception that ensure that they can learn new things and practise their skills regularly. Every opportunity is taken to develop children's speaking and listening skills. In one lesson, children were encouraged to explain why certain shapes cannot roll and made good progress in sounding out words such as 'cube'.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and carefully plan learning in well-thought-out lessons. They effectively question pupils to check their knowledge and understanding and to make them think hard about the topics they study.
- Pupils are given opportunities to find things out for themselves. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils made good progress taking turns in giving each other directions to get through a maze. Year 6 pupils made excellent progress in writing an effective opening paragraph about what lay behind a mysterious door.
- Some of the teaching assistants in the school are bilingual and speak the languages that the children use at home. This ensures their start in the school is smooth, that good relationships are established between home and school and that any misconceptions can be sorted out quickly, allowing pupils to make rapid progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at least good progress because teachers and other adults break learning down into small, achievable steps. They give pupils clear explanations and make good use of resources to make learning practical and interesting.
- Teachers have been successful in improving pupils' progress in developing their writing skills. Pupils respond well to teachers emphasising the need to use accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. However, there are not sufficient opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects.
- Work in pupils' books is marked accurately and regularly. It often gives written comments, and helpful advice is provided so pupils know what to do to improve next time, but this is not consistent across the school. Teachers do not always check that pupils follow up on these helpful suggestions in order to improve further.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well in lessons and around the school, and are courteous, respectful and friendly. Pupils wear their uniform smartly and with pride and take good care of their surroundings. Parents, carers and staff all have very positive views on pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They show great enthusiasm for learning and are determined to do their very best; this results in their good and improving achievement. Pupils follow instructions without fuss and get on with their work diligently.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including those posed through the internet. Pupils say they feel safe and cared for well.
- Pupils say there is no bullying. They know about the different types of bullying such as name-calling or physical bullying. Pupils are confident that adults will help them if they go to them with

any concerns.

- Pupils are proud of their school and carry out responsibilities eagerly and sensibly, such as acting as playground and house leaders. On the playground, pupils play well together and enjoy the chance to use excess energy. They are considerate and kind to one another as they play.
- Attendance is above average, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school. The efforts made by senior leaders to promote regular attendance continue to be successful.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is a very effective leader who sets high standards, inspires trust, and brings out the best in others. Other leaders and governors support her very well and together they set high expectations for all staff. Staff are all committed to raising pupils' achievement and morale is high.
- The school has good procedures for checking the progress and attainment of all individuals and groups of pupils. Any pupils at risk of falling behind are quickly identified and given extra support to help them keep up with other pupils. A detailed school improvement plan outlines the correct areas to improve and what needs to be done to achieve this. The school is well placed to continue to improve.
- Leaders at all levels are supported well in developing their roles and in how they use data to improve pupils' progress in each year group. However, when they record the findings of their checks on the quality of teaching, they do not always tie their judgements sufficiently to the progress that groups of pupils make. Effective leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that children make good progress across all areas for learning.
- The curriculum helps promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills well. Pupils study interesting and exciting topics such as those about pirates, the First World War and the Second World War. Additional learning opportunities including visits, visitors and clubs also provide pupils with rich and memorable experiences. Equal opportunities for different groups of pupils are promoted well and the school does not tolerate any form of discrimination.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well through the school's clear vision and beliefs. Assemblies are a time of coming together to consider key values. Pupils are able to reflect on issues and have a strong sense of right and wrong.
- Leaders are using the primary sports funding provided by the government to train staff to deliver physical education lessons more effectively and improve pupils' physical well-being. More pupils are participating in the increased range of after-school sports activities, such as multi-skills, netball and rugby. There are appropriate plans in place to measure the impact of this spending.
- The local authority keeps a close check on the performance of the school and has provided appropriate and measured support. It rightly has confidence in the school's leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a clear knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and how well it is doing compared to the national picture. They competently analyse data on pupils' progress and attainment, including the progress made by all groups of pupils. Governors are supportive while ensuring the school does all it can to improve pupils' achievement further. They carefully monitor the school's finances, including the extra pupil premium funding, and understand how

it is helping pupils to achieve better. Governors pay regular visits to lessons to observe the quality of teaching. They understand the requirements relating to the management of staff performance and make sure that pay and promotion are linked to the achievement of pupils. Governors ensure that all safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

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	116878
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	431549

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	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sharon MacLeod
Headteacher	Jacqueline Smith
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 2009
Telephone number	01386 446748
Fax number	01386 429056
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