

Margaret Roper Catholic Primary School

Russell Hill Road, Purley, CR8 2XP

Inspection dates 6–7 March 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.

- Pupils achieve well. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above the national average. Attainment at Key Stage 2 is also above the national average in reading and writing.
- A recent dip in mathematics scores at the end of Key Stage 2 has been addressed and achievement in this subject has now improved.
- Teaching is good because most activities are carefully planned to meet pupils' needs and help them to make good progress.
- Leaders, managers and governors have ensured that teaching and achievement have improved. Governors are well informed and understand how well the school is doing.
- The headteacher and his leadership team understand what needs to be done to further improve the school. They have set clear expectations for good teaching and support their staff to improve their practice. Staff and governors share this vision and ambition.
- Pupils speak very positively about their school, feel safe, behave well and treat adults and each other with kindness and courtesy.
- Provision in the school for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Teaching is not yet outstanding because the most-able pupils are not always asked questions that make them think deeply about topics and support rapid progress to the higher-attainment levels.
- Marking of pupils' work is variable between subjects and does not identify the next steps for pupils to improve their own attainment.
- The wider leadership team is not trained to support the headteacher and deputy headteacher in checking on and improving the quality of teaching.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 10 lessons or parts of lessons taught by seven teachers. Additional activities included short visits to classrooms to look at sessions for those with specific needs as well as special activities for Book Week. In addition they observed lunchtimes, breakfast club and a school assembly.
- One lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher. The deputy headteacher accompanied an inspector in checking pupils' books to see how well groups of pupils are now progressing in a range of subjects.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, a representative of the governing body and subject and school leaders. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 106 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as informal discussions with parents and carers, a phone call and three letters. The views of the staff were taken into account through meetings and the 24 responses to staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed their choice of reading books.
- The school's own attainment records for the current as well as previous academic years were scrutinised in addition to published information on pupils' achievement. Planning documents were examined, as well as records relating to pupils' safety and welfare, including the school's single central record of security checks on staff, the behaviour logs and attendance records.

Inspection team

Patricia MacLachlan, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Olsen Davis	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than the average-sized primary school. It serves the parish of St John the Baptist and in addition draws pupils from across and outside the borough of Croydon. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of one Reception class.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium, which is extra money provided by the government for pupils eligible for free school meals, children in public care and those from service families, is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above the national average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and pupils with African, Mixed and Other White backgrounds are the next largest groups. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has experienced some changes of senior staff since the previous inspection. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader, the English leader and the mathematics leader have all been appointed to these posts since then.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - training all adults in the classroom to set tasks and ask questions that challenge pupils, especially the more able, to think deeply and explain their answers in more detail
 - marking pupils' work with more precise and concise comments that show them how to improve their work in mathematics
- Improve leadership and management of teaching further by training subject leaders to check on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching in their subjects so that they can hold teachers to account.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join Reception with the skills that are expected of four-year-olds nationally. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress and join Key Stage 1 with levels of development that are above the national average.
- There is a strong focus on phonics (the linking of sounds to letters) that is sustained during the Key Stage 1 years so that higher than average proportions of pupils met the standard in the phonics screening check last year. Higher-level scores in reading were also significantly above the national average at the end of Year 2.
- Scrutiny of the progress records of pupils currently in Key Stage 1 indicate this trend is likely to continue. This is because high proportions are making expected or better progress in all subjects and meeting the ambitious targets that have been set for them.
- Progress records of pupils currently in Key Stage 2 also show that the gap between rates of progress in mathematics and English are closing. The most recent summary of Year 6 performance shows a strong improvement in mathematics attainment.
- Commitment to equal opportunities is evident because progress, particularly in reading and writing, is good relative to the pupils' starting points. In classes where there are groups of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, they too, are making the same progress as their classmates. This also applies to pupils from minority ethnic groups and for whom English is an additional language. This is because the school has focused on training staff to plan effectively to support them.
- The most-able pupils are making good progress and recent school records show that increasing proportions of the most-able pupils in Year 6 are now attaining high scores in reading, writing and mathematics. The work seen in their books was of a high standard and additional sessions have been arranged for those capable of reaching Level 6.
- Money from the pupil premium grant is used effectively to pay for small-group activities in reading, writing and mathematics. There were too few pupils in Year 6 to compare attainment with that of their peers without the risk of identifying individual pupils. However, as a result of individual support, many of these pupils throughout the school are catching up well with their classmates.
- Pupils enjoy reading and receive good guidance to help improve their skills. They enjoy borrowing books to read at home and were proud of their contributions to book week.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good because strong and supportive relationships are established between all adults and pupils in the classroom so pupils are consequently keen to learn. Well-planned and interesting tasks offer pupils good opportunities to make progress.
- For example, during a Year 6 lesson, where the pupils' observational skills were developed by drafting a poem in response to a book illustration, different pupils were given tasks of differing complexity. These ranged from using different rhyming patterns and vocabulary to choosing ways to recite their work in progress. Adults circulated around the classroom, prompting with questions that sustained and extended pupils' explanations. As a consequence, all groups of pupils made good progress.
- Pupils understand the progress they are making in their work because teachers mark their work regularly. However marking is not yet equally precise in mathematics and pupils do not always act upon advice and make necessary improvements to their calculations. Moreover, a sizeable minority of the parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, wanted clearer information about the progress made by their children.
- Where teaching is helping pupils make the most progress, adults reshape tasks quickly if pupils

are not succeeding to make sure the work is neither too easy nor too difficult. Skilled teaching assistants give extended support to pupils who need additional help to complete tasks.

- Pupils, particularly those capable of making faster progress, are given extension tasks but these do not always include the open-ended challenges or targeted questions that support deep and extended thinking among the most-able pupils.
- As a result of the disappointing mathematics results in Year 6 last year, there has been focused staff training and the introduction of daily mental mathematics sessions across the school is helping to improve pupils' progress.
- Teaching assistants have been given additional training and are now leading small groups effectively to help pupils who need additional support in mathematics. Secondary teachers have also been enlisted to teach small groups capable of making faster progress to higher levels. Pupils say that they enjoy and gain confidence from these activities. School data shows that more pupils are now making good progress in mathematics than was the case last year.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage skilfully blends the activities led by the teacher and those chosen by the children to support confident self-expression. Adults provide a stimulating choice of activities for the children and their careful questioning draws out descriptions or calculations while the children are happily engaged in physical or creative tasks.
- Phonics (the linking of sounds to letters) is well taught. Consequently, pupils enjoy applying their reading skills and select books from the cosy school library for pleasure as well as using reference books accurately to improve their written work in a range of subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Pupils work very cooperatively with each other, share resources and concentrate to complete tasks. The behaviour of pupils is good rather than outstanding because pupils are not always able to identify their next steps for improving their work in all subjects and as a consequence are not always able to demonstrate exemplary attitudes to learning.
- Pupils behave well outside lessons, interacting politely with adult helpers in the dining room and playground. There is a harmonious atmosphere around the school and pupils act responsibly. The school is effective in promoting good relationships. Pupils share the playground areas sensibly, welcoming others to join in games and activities. 'We are a small school and would notice if someone was unhappy ...and do something about it', is a typical comment.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils believe that they are kept safe in school and are well looked after by the adults around them. The climate of friendship and the support from adults lead to pupils acting respectfully towards each other and to adults.
- Pupils understand about different types of bullying and they say that bullying is rare. They trust adults to help them and deal effectively with any problems that might arise. Opportunities for the Junior Road Safety Officers to lead assemblies and events about road safety and cyber bullying make a strong impact. Adults express strong satisfaction with the school's good management of behaviour.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy effective relationships in a secure environment, supervised by staff well trained to cope with minor mishaps.
- Attendance is above average because effective strategies are used to encourage good attendance and punctuality, particularly with pupils who travel long distances to school.
- Parents and carers overwhelmingly believe that the school provides a safe and caring environment. Pupils enjoy coming to school because they look forward to varied activities and interesting lessons. Pupils know right from wrong and have opportunities to act as 'problem professors' who encourage kind behaviour. This reinforces moral and social development well.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and his deputy have developed a sound system for sharing lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' books. As a consequence, teachers' classroom practice has improved. Leadership and management are not outstanding because middle leaders do not take a full part in checking on standards of teaching and achievement.
 - Leaders have developed systems that ensure that only those teachers who meet required standards move up the salary scale. The headteacher does not shirk difficult conversations about teaching performance when these are necessary.
 - Leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good because procedures to monitor children's progress are followed consistently. Activities are planned well to meet children's needs and interests. Arrangements for transition from home and nurseries help the children to settle in quickly. Plans for an additional 'bulge' Reception class in 2014 include improving the outdoor classroom area to make it more stimulating for language and mathematical development.
 - Provision to encourage spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. Pupils reflect on the differences between right and wrong in lively assemblies. They raise money for Cafod with creative activities like an international food festival. The older pupils, as 'problem professors', help to maintain positive relationships in the playground and around the school. Opportunities to experience Latin and music lessons are well received, as are residential journeys to France and visits to cultural events such as the 'Young Voices Festival' at the O2 Arena. In addition to Christian celebrations, visits to other faiths' places of worship such as the Neasden Temple extend pupils' spiritual understanding.
 - The primary school sports funding is being used to engage a specialist who is training the class teachers to improve their skills in teaching gymnastics and team games. Pupils' enjoyment of physical education has increased as a consequence of this initiative. A good range of well-attended sports and dance clubs also helps to promote a healthy lifestyle.
 - Effective safeguarding systems meet statutory requirements and policies are consistently applied with governors taking an active role in checking this. Leaders promote equal opportunities and are assiduous in tackling any discrimination that may arise.
 - Leaders work effectively with other schools. The school is supported by its partnership with the Croydon Catholic Schools Cluster in checking the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' work and in arranging projects, for example, to improve teachers' skills in planning mathematics lessons.
 - The local authority has provided support to this school by running staff training on effective teaching of pupils for whom English is an additional language. In addition, local authority consultants support the school in training programmes for governors, special educational needs, mathematics and literacy.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body know the standards of achievement and teaching in the school because the headteacher's summary reports provide clear information and governors ask challenging questions about any changes in pupils' outcomes. Governors have an accurate understanding of how pupils are performing compared with national standards because they use the published data to compare pupils' performance with national figures. They also make systematic visits to the school to make sure that reported improvements are borne out. Governors understand the link between teachers' pay progression and pupils' progress. They have revised the pay policy and receive summaries of teachers' performance from the headteacher. They are aware of what support has been provided to improve teaching and if there has been any underperformance. Checks are made that the pupil premium funds are spent on the intended groups and oversight of safeguarding is conscientious. The governing body ensures that the budget is very carefully managed and supports strategic planning by reviewing the school improvement plan.
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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	101797
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	431281

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	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Hearne
Headteacher	Dermot Mooney
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 June 2009
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