

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Cheetham Hill Road, Dukinfield, Cheshire, SK16 5LB

Inspection dates 22–23 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- The headteacher leads the school well and with an outstanding determination that has resulted in rapid improvement to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since the last inspection.
- Pupils throughout the school make good progress and achieve well. Standards in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen and are above average.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding so pupils learn quickly.
- Governance is securely focused on bringing about improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' good attitudes to learning, their behaviour around the school and the way that they are kept safe make a strong contribution to their good achievement in school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching. The most-able pupils are not challenged well enough in some classes.
- Teachers' marking is not used consistently to show pupils how to improve, nor are pupils given enough time to respond to the advice they are given.
- New and less experienced members of the leadership team have not yet developed the full range of leadership skills to enable them to impact fully on improving teaching and learning throughout the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes and saw 14 lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher. Discussions were held with pupils in lessons and their work was discussed with them.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and middle leaders, members of the governing body, teaching and support staff, pupils and a member of the local authority.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised in writing, mathematics and a range of other subjects.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and checked reading progress records.
- A wide range of documentation was reviewed, including national assessment data, the school's information about pupils' progress, monitoring records of the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils, and the school improvement plan. In addition, the minutes of the governing body meetings, safeguarding documentation and external reports from the local authority were reviewed.
- Nineteen responses from parents to the on-line questionnaire were taken into account (Parent View), as well as questionnaires completed by members of staff. Members of the inspection team also spoke to parents while they were bringing their children to school and reviewed other responses from parents gathered by the school.

Inspection team

Gillian Hunter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Catherine Beeks

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action, at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is almost the same as the national average. The pupil premium is funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress at all times by:
 - making sure teaching always challenges the most-able pupils so they learn at a rapid rate and reach the highest levels of which they are capable
 - making sure that the systems for marking pupils' work is consistent in all classes so pupils gain a clear understanding of what they need to improve
 - giving pupils time to respond to teachers' written comments about their work and progress
 - using the outstanding teaching in the school to support all staff to improve their skills.
- Develop the roles and responsibilities of new and inexperienced leaders and provide them with targeted leadership training and support to enable them to be fully involved in checking on the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children's abilities are typical for their age when they enter Reception. Some are below in the aspects of communication, social and emotional development and understanding the world. Consistently good and better teaching means that they make good progress. All reach at least a good level of development in all that they do and are fully prepared for the challenges of Year 1 by the time they leave Reception.
- Pupils build well on this good start in Key Stage 1. There has been a continued improvement in their achievement since the last inspection. Results of the phonics (letters and the sounds they make) screening check in Year 1 are above the national average. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 were also above average in 2013. The proportions of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics were just below the national average and current checks on pupils' progress show pupils to be on track to improve on last year's performance.
- Attainment and progress at the end of Year 6 also show an improving picture over the past three years, since the previous inspection. Standards in all subjects were better than the national average in 2013. In the current year, progress in Year 6, as in most other classes, has been rapid. The work in pupils' books, as well as current checks on pupils' progress, show pupils in Year 6 to be well on track to reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics, with some potentially reaching the highest Level 6.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. They value books and have good attitudes to reading for learning and pleasure. Many have a variety of books at home and enjoy talking about their favourite authors. Pupils in Year 2 are confident readers. They use their phonics skills well to tackle unfamiliar words and read without difficulty. By the end of Year 6, pupils are fluent and accurate readers, even with texts they have not seen before. They have a good understanding of what they read and are also confident when they are asked to read aloud, which they do with expression and enthusiasm.
- The most-able pupils in classes where teaching is particularly strong are continually challenged and currently they do well, especially in Year 2 and Year 6. Progress of the most-able pupils in other classes is not as consistent. Inspection evidence shows that activities do not take enough account of what the most-able pupils have already achieved in order to 'stretch' them and so they make less progress than they might otherwise do.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium are making rapid progress. They are now achieving better than similar pupils nationally in reading and writing and are in line in mathematics. The gap in attainment between this group and other pupils in the school is narrowing rapidly. In Year 6 in 2013 these pupils were a term behind other pupils in the school in reading and writing and two terms in mathematics. This has improved since 2012 when they were more than two years behind.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good, due to the well-targeted support given to them by teaching assistants.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good and sometimes outstanding teaching leads to good achievement in lessons and over time. Pupils have a positive attitude to their learning; they work hard and cooperate well with each other. Relationships are good and pupils are confident and keen to learn more and achieve well.
- While teachers plan work for different ability groups, some of the work is too easy for the most-able pupils and this prevents some from reaching the higher levels, especially in writing and mathematics, because they too often only get on to the harder work after they have completed similar tasks to those of other pupils.
- The majority of teachers adapt their plans skilfully when they recognise that pupils have understood the work and move the learning on rapidly. All pupils in a Year 6 geometry lesson

made rapid progress because of the teacher's ability to pinpoint pupils' different abilities and challenge the most able to measure their own progress and test themselves further during the lesson. Outstanding teaching and learning in the school is not yet sufficiently shared in order to further improve the overall quality of teaching.

- Occasionally, pupils do not make enough progress because they do not clearly understand what they are learning. One group of pupils was asked to order number cards. They were not clear about the value of the numbers they were using and some did not know the number names, so were unable to find the answers. They spent too long in the lesson struggling before they were supported to move on in their learning.
- Teachers ask skilful questions to check what pupils can do and also prompt them to explain their thinking. This was seen in an outstanding Year 2 mathematics lesson where pupils were learning about recording the data collected into a graph. The teacher had good subject knowledge and used this effectively to question and challenge pupils of different ages and abilities so that they were able to structure their work more precisely. The most able, through discussing and checking, recognised that using intervals of 5 on the axis would improve their work.
- There are good methods in place to check on pupils' progress and pupils' books are marked regularly, but it is not always clear to pupils how to improve their work. In addition, pupils do not always learn from their mistakes because they are not given the opportunity to respond to points made by their teachers.
- Pupils' progress is reviewed every half term and targets for the end of the year are confirmed. Pupils' on-going achievements in literacy and mathematics are recorded systematically in order to measure their progress at any stage during the term. This leads to well-targeted extra support and guidance for individual pupils who are underachieving or falling behind, which helps them to catch up with their learning. There are many opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning and test their ideas on each other. Teaching assistants are a crucial part of the teaching team. They know the pupils well and provide good learning support for pupils' particular needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The Christian ethos and values that are taught by the school contribute to securing the good behaviour of pupils.
- In lessons they are attentive and keen to learn. They work hard and are willing to cooperate with each other. Pupils enjoy school and say 'The teachers make the lessons fun and interesting and this helps us learn a lot of new things.'
- Pupils also behave well around the school. They are well-mannered in the dining room and their behaviour during school assemblies is excellent. They are polite and respectful and have trusting relationships with both adults and other pupils in school. They arrive in school punctually and their attendance is above the national average.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils understand different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They know the systems for reporting any instances of bullying, and pupils say that all staff respond quickly and appropriately.
- Most parents spoken to during the inspection and through responses to the on-line and school questionnaire indicated they believe that behaviour is good. They think their children are kept safe and commented on how their children, including those with disabilities or special educational needs, enjoyed school.
- Older pupils take on responsibilities for supporting younger pupils. Some pupils are members of The Leadership Team who represent their class in reporting ideas and views to improve the school and support their classmates.
- They keep the school and playground tidy and are particularly proud of the areas where they can learn outdoors, including the wooded area and the outdoor playground that pupils, parents, staff and governors have helped to plan and create.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are tolerant and

supportive of each other. They understand other faiths and cultures and use their personal qualities to explore the experiences and feelings of others within the local and wider communities. Pupils contribute enthusiastically to local, national and world-wide charities.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads the school well and with an outstanding determination that the school will continue to improve. He has had an enormous impact on the school's rapidly improved performance. He is supported by an effective and developing senior and middle leadership team who, with the governing body, continue to strive for further improvement. Since the last inspection there have been a number of changes in the leadership team. This has resulted in a reallocation of roles and responsibilities to a wider group of leaders, some of whom are less experienced.
- All leaders, including governors, have an accurate picture of how well the school is performing and clear aims and plans for its future. Everyone is highly ambitious for the school and share a commitment to improving standards and achievement further.
- Staff and governors have used support from the local authority and external consultants to improve teaching and pupils' progress. The inspectors agreed with the local authority's view that school leaders have the ability to improve the school even further.
- The headteacher and governors ensure that procedures for the appraisal of teachers' work are securely in place. The management of teachers' performance ensures that all teachers and other staff have relevant targets to help them improve. Leaders make sure that further training and support for teachers helps them to learn new skills. The expectation of good and better teaching is measured effectively through the Teachers' Standards. Teachers know that financial reward is linked to classroom performance. They are supported well, through professional discussion and well-planned training to help them work towards their performance targets. Leaders recognise that the sharing of outstanding teaching would contribute effectively to teachers' professional development.
- The primary school sport funding has been used successfully to raise participation levels and pupils are now very aware of the need to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Links with the local high school have improved the range of sports activities available to pupils.

The governance of the school:

- The governing body is highly supportive of the school and effectively holds school leaders to account. Since the previous inspection, governors have looked critically at their own work and taken steps to improve their skills in order to be more effective. Governors are skilled at analysing national assessment data to compare the school's academic performance with other schools. Governors are aware of how well pupil premium spending is helping those pupils to achieve. They regularly check the progress of different groups to make sure there is equality of opportunity. They have a clear picture of the overall teaching quality and how that is linked to the salaries structure. Other finances, including the primary sport funding are managed efficiently. There are no concerns over safeguarding, which continues to meet all statutory requirements fully.

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	106240
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	442387

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	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Oliver O'Doherty
Headteacher	Jon Murray
Date of previous school inspection	18 December 2012
Telephone number	0161 368 4824
Fax number	0844 292 7656
Email address	jon.murray@st-marys-dukinfield.tameside.sch.uk

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