

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Coronation Crescent, Madeley, Telford, TF7 5EJ

Inspection dates 11–12 June 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 school has rapidly improved to good because of the headteacher's strong and very effective leadership which has focused on raising the quality of the teaching.
- Pupils currently make good progress from starting points that are often well below those typically found.
- The school's data shows that attainment has rapidly risen and the current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach the nationally expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is good and their attitudes to learning are often exemplary. The school's work to ensure pupils' safety is good.
- Teaching is good because the staff create a very positive climate for learning. The headteacher has an exemplary system for the induction of new staff and ensuring their continuing professional development.
- The newly restructured governing body is working very effectively to challenge and support the school leaders. Governors systematically check the effectiveness of the school's work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although their progress is improving, there is a gap between the attainment of pupils entitled to funding from the pupil premium grant and their classmates.
- Pupils in Year 3, who were below national averages in writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, are yet to catch up with the levels expected for their ages.
- Teachers do not check pupils' learning sufficiently in lessons.
- Teachers do not have sufficient opportunities to observe and work alongside outstanding teachers within the school or in other schools.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in six lessons. A number of these were observed jointly with the headteacher and the assistant headteacher.
- Meetings and discussions took place with the headteacher, senior leaders, governors, pupils, staff, parents and a representative of the local authority.
- Samples of pupils' work were examined. Some pupils read books to the inspector.
- Too few parents used the online survey, Parent View, for it to inform the inspection. The inspector took account of the 47 responses to the school's own parental questionnaire.
- The inspector took account of the responses to the staff questionnaire the school had recently undertaken.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including data on pupils' progress and attainment produced by the school, procedures for safeguarding, the school's own evaluations of its work, reports to the governing body and leaders' plans for raising attainment.

Inspection team

Geof Timms, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- There has been a newly appointed headteacher, deputy headteacher and significant changes to teaching and other staff since the previous inspection.
- Almost all of the pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well-above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is well-above average.
- A well-above average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. This provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The school's most recent results cannot be compared to the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress, because there were not enough pupils to make such comparisons meaningful.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement further by:
 - ensuring more of the pupils entitled to funding from the pupil premium grant make progress that is above that expected
 - accelerating the progress of the pupils in Year 3 in writing and mathematics so that they reach the levels expected for their ages.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring teachers monitor the pupils' learning in lessons more closely so they can adapt their teaching if necessary
 - providing teachers with more opportunities to observe and work alongside high quality practitioners, either in their own school or elsewhere.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When they start in Reception, a significant proportion of the children have levels of skills and abilities which are well below those typical for their age, especially in their reading, writing and number skills. Children make good progress during the Reception year and have reached levels close to those expected for the end of the year.
- The results of the 2013 national check on Year 1 pupils' skills in linking letters and sounds (phonics) were below average, but much improved over the previous year. Current pupils are on track to do even better and exceed the 2013 national average. This reflects the good-quality teaching of phonics and reading younger pupils receive.
- The 2013 assessments made at the end of Year 2 were below average. Pupils in Year 3 are making good progress now, especially in reading, but still need to do more to catch up with expected levels in writing and mathematics. The current pupils in Year 2 have made progress that is well above that expected this year and more of them are on track to reach or exceed the higher levels especially in mathematics.
- In 2013, Year 6 pupils were, on average, about three terms behind other pupils nationally as a result of the legacy of inadequate teaching and poor progress in the past. However, the progress made by the Year 6 pupils accelerated greatly after the headteacher took up her post. Current progress evident throughout the school in the assessment data and in pupils' work is consistently above that expected.
- The current high quality teaching and rapid progress has brought current standards in Year 6 up to the expected levels with many more pupils reaching the higher levels. For example, all pupils have made twice the expected progress in reading this year. All of the girls and most boys have also made twice the expected progress in writing and mathematics.
- Progress in reading is good throughout the school. Pupils who read to the inspector were reading a range of books, including non-fiction, and could talk about favourite stories. A Year 1 pupil, for example, was enjoying reading a challenging book by Roald Dahl.
- In writing and mathematics, good achievement is evident throughout the school and the pupils' skills in problem solving are being very effectively developed. This is a great improvement over the picture at the previous inspection.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive effective extra help, and this is reflected in their good progress. The school's data show that there are no significant differences in the achievement of other groups, including the most able, and all groups achieve well.
- In 2013 the pupils supported by the pupil premium were up to two terms behind their classmates. They are now making progress in line with their peers across the school although this has not yet been sufficient to help them close remaining gaps in achievement.

The quality of teaching is good

- The pupils' work, the school's assessment data and direct observations in lessons all point to consistently good quality teaching. This matches the school's view which is based on a wide range of monitoring activities. Although aspects of the teaching have been inadequate in the past, strong leadership has led to significant improvements to the quality of teaching. The current good teaching is having a very positive impact on pupils' learning and progress.
- Leaders have a clear ambition to make more of the teaching outstanding. The work done by the headteacher to introduce new teachers to the staff team and to continue their professional development through training is being used by the local authority as an excellent example for other schools. An example of this is evident in the good quality teaching now found in the early Years Foundation Stage where the provision was an issue for improvement at the previous inspection.
- Weaknesses in achievement arising from frequent changes in staffing and inadequate teaching in the past have been effectively addressed. However, teachers have not had enough opportunities to observe and work with outstanding practitioners, within the school or in other schools, so that high quality teaching skills can be spread more widely.
- Teachers ensure pupils' attitudes to their learning and their interest in their work are strong across the school. Pupils talk positively about how they enjoy lessons and especially how the teachers provide them with a range of practical activities.
- Teachers' use of assessment information and other data is good. They are aware of how well pupils in their class is learning over time. However, teachers do not always check closely enough on how well their pupils are learning in lessons. Because of this, misconceptions are not always identified or addressed quickly enough.
- The regular marking of pupils' work provides them with clear suggestions for improvements and is constructive. Pupils talk positively about how helpful they find teachers' marking and they enjoy responding to the comments, which they say help them to learn more quickly. Pupils enjoyed talking about and sharing their work with the inspector and showed a real pride in their efforts.
- Pupils who find learning more difficult and those who have specific learning needs are supported effectively. One of the school's strengths is the way teaching assistants work regularly with the most-able pupils. This ensures they are aware of what high quality achievement looks like and also gives the teachers time to work with those who find learning more difficult.
- Good quality specialist teaching is evident in physical education. The sports coach supports the development of teachers' skills and sessions provide some good learning opportunities for all age groups. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 developed excellent bowling skills through learning how to bowl in-swingers, out-swingers and to spin the ball.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In all lessons observed behaviour was often exemplary and most pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to learn and this has a major impact on their good progress. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy their work. Behaviour around the school is good and pupils get on together well at break and lunchtimes. As one pupil said 'All are best friends!'

- Pupils talk positively about aspects of school life which they enjoy. In particular, they are very positive about the new leadership team and teachers, and also the sports coaching they receive. They have excellent opportunities to take on a range of responsibilities including looking after younger pupils, acting as librarians or taking an active part in the staff interview process.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school, and almost all the parents who completed the questionnaire confirmed this view. Pupils are confident that there are adults in school they trust and would confide in if worried or concerned about anything. They say bullying is rare and are aware of the different types of bullying, such as through the use of computers or mobile phones, and of how to keep themselves safe while using new technology.
- On the rare occasions when pupils have been excluded from school this was carried out correctly and the actions were appropriate given the circumstances. Pupils' individual needs are catered for wherever possible and the staff go out of their way to include pupils facing challenging circumstances. Case studies show these pupils are well-supported and making good progress.
- Attendance is broadly average. Any patterns of regular absence are very well tracked and followed up by the school's business manager. Persistent absenteeism is low and is limited to a very small number of families. The vast majority of the parents appreciate the importance of full attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- Since taking up their roles, the headteacher, assistant headteacher and reconstituted governing body have provided a strong direction for the school with a clear focus on raising achievement, accelerating pupils' progress and ensuring more of the teaching is consistently good. Because of this the school is growing in popularity and pupil numbers are rising.
- Staff, governors and parents talk very positively about how well the school is led by the headteacher. She is providing excellent leadership and is well supported by the assistant headteacher. The clear focus on offering pupils high quality teaching, improving the learning environment and continuously providing staff with coaching, support and challenge is having a clear impact on the rapidly improving progress. Subject leaders, and others with leadership responsibilities, are developing their roles well and receiving high quality support from the senior leadership.
- All staff who completed a questionnaire said they were proud to be working at the school and many comments were focused on the changes the new headteacher has introduced. Pupils said she had 'brought out the best' in the school. The school's view of its successes and areas for improvement is accurate and leaders know what remains to be done to improve further. The planning for future improvement is detailed and contains appropriate priorities.
- The monitoring of teaching and pupils' learning is carried out effectively by leaders and governors. The assessments made of pupils' work are checked between staff, and with the local authority, to make sure they are accurate. This data is used in regular meetings between leaders and staff to track the achievement of individual pupils, enabling underachievement to be quickly recognised and addressed.
- The local authority has provided the school with a very effective level of challenge and support. Regular visits have checked on the improvements made by the school and validated the school's judgements.

- Funding available through the pupil premium is used effectively to help eligible pupils to take a full part in school life and benefit, where appropriate, from specific resources and additional help from adults. Although their current progress is improving, these pupils need to make even more progress if they are to fully close the gap between themselves and their classmates. The progress being made by these and other pupils is monitored closely by the headteacher and governing body.
- The money available to promote physical education and sporting opportunities is used well. Pupils are taking part in more sporting activities in school and with other schools, and this is having a positive impact on their well-being.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Staff are working hard to ensure the school is ready for the imminent changes to the way subjects are planned. Well-planned enrichment activities, such as those with a visiting author and illustrator, and through close links to the Church, have a very positive impact on pupils' learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the last inspection the governing body has reconstituted to make its work more efficient. There is a knowledgeable group of governors who are having a significant impact on school improvement
 - The governors hold the school to account through a wide range of monitoring activities. There are regular visits, meetings with, and reports from, the headteacher and other staff. Recent visits have monitored the work of the sports coach, the provision for pupils with disabilities or who have special educational needs, and the use of the outside resources by the Reception children. Because of this, governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and of pupils' progress
 - Governors have a clear understanding of the system used to determine teachers' effectiveness in enabling pupils to make good progress. Decisions about teachers' pay are appropriately linked to performance and responsibilities and, where weaknesses have needed addressing, the governing body has been fully and appropriately involved
 - Governors track finances well are fully involved in decisions about how to spend additional money, such as the pupil premium and sports funding.

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	123556
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	442572

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	108
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pauline Boyle
Headteacher	Samantha Griffiths
Date of previous school inspection	31 October 2012
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