

St Agatha's Catholic Primary School

St Agatha's Drive, Kingston-upon-Thames, KT2 5TY

Inspection dates 26–27 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	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 make good progress and achieve well. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is much higher than the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Pupils make particularly rapid progress in reading. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children quickly acquire basic reading and writing skills. Teaching across the school builds very well on this good start so that pupils are accomplished readers by the end of Year 6.
- A successful focus on improving the quality of teaching over the past year means that pupils' progress is speeding up across the school.
- The school is an inclusive and harmonious community. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported and achieve well.
- Pupils are proud of their school and behave well. They feel very safe. Attendance is above average.
- The headteacher's calm and purposeful approach has effectively steered the school through a period of change. Almost all parents would recommend the school to others.
- Leaders, including governors, have secured important improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement in the past year.
- The governors provide good levels of support and challenge for the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to secure pupils' outstanding achievement.
- At times, the work set for pupils is not hard enough, particularly for the most able.
- Some pupils have a clearer view of how well they are learning than others because the quality of teachers' marking varies between classes.
- Middle leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement across the school are not rigorous enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons or part-lessons, including ten observations carried out jointly with the headteacher or with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed small groups of pupils working with an adult other than their teacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, members of staff, parents, pupils and a representative of the local authority. A meeting was also held with the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors took account of 140 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). In addition, inspectors considered the views expressed by a number of parents who spoke with them informally at the start of the school day or who sent letters or emails. Inspectors also took account of 45 staff questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and considered a range of documents and policies, including the school's improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, attendance records and safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work provided by the school, as well as looking at pupils' work in lessons. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Bimla Thakur	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Cole	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. St Agatha's converted to become an academy school on 1 February 2012. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged outstanding overall.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below that found in most schools. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by making sure that:
 - the work set for pupils, particularly the most-able, is hard enough
 - pupils in all classes are given regular guidance in teachers' marking about how to make their work better
 - pupils have regular opportunities to read and respond to teachers' comments.
- Improve middle leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In the past two years, pupils' attainment has been much higher than the national average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school is on track to secure further increases in pupils' attainment in 2014, particularly in mathematics.
- Children's levels of knowledge and understanding when they join the Early Years Foundation Stage are in line with those expected for their age. Children make good progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in the development of reading and writing skills. Their attainment is above average by the end of Reception Year.
- Pupils' progress in reading is rapid and sustained across the school. As a result, pupils' attainment in reading is much higher than the national average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The results of the Year 1 phonics check have been above average for the past two years. Teachers and parents give reading a high priority and pupils read widely and often.
- Pupils use their knowledge of the sounds letters make (phonics) very well. Younger pupils who read to inspectors said that their reading has improved this year and that they are better at spelling. Older pupils read confidently and enthusiastically. They talk about books such as 'Animal Farm' and 'Lord of the Rings' with maturity and insight. Their love of books is clear.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is faster this year because teaching has improved, particularly at Key Stage 2. As a result, standards in mathematics are on track to rise in 2014. Pupils solve number problems confidently and explain their calculations clearly.
- The most able pupils in the school make good progress. The proportions of pupils attaining the higher levels in 2013 were above average in mathematics and much higher than the national average in reading and writing. Occasionally, the work set is not hard enough to test and extend pupils' thinking, and this hinders their progress.
- The very few pupils eligible for support from additional funding make similar progress to their classmates. Improvements in teaching mean that their progress has quickly improved in the last year. The gap in attainment between these pupils and their peers has narrowed rapidly.
- Those pupils new to speaking or writing English make good progress. They are keen to learn and are well supported during lessons. Teaching assistants are attentive to their needs, and help out when needed. However, they also make sure that pupils are given the time to think for themselves before intervening.
- The small numbers of disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs keep pace with their classmates. Teachers and teaching assistants understand their needs and set appropriate tasks during lessons.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is consistently good over time, so that pupils achieve well. There are many opportunities for pupils to think creatively about their learning, particularly in writing tasks. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and confidently express their ideas.
- The quality of teaching has improved. More frequent checks on pupils' progress mean that teachers have a clearer view of what individual pupils need to learn next and understand their responsibility for pupils' achievement. Teachers quickly identify any pupils who are falling behind and provide extra help where needed.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are keen to read and write and quickly grow in confidence. Across the school, pupils use reading and writing skills in a wide range of subjects and become proficient writers by the end of Year 6.
- Well-focused training has strengthened teachers' understanding of how to teach mathematical skills. Increased opportunities for pupils to practise and strengthen number and calculation skills mean that they are confident in tackling mathematical problems.

- Teaching assistants are well deployed and play a valuable role in supporting pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. For example, one pupil was well supported during an activity involving even and odd numbers because the teaching assistant helped her to use a hundred square successfully.
- In most classes, the work that teachers plan for pupils is set at the right level of difficulty to ensure that all pupils make good progress. However, in a few cases the work is too easy, so that pupils' progress slows.
- Regular marking ensures that pupils know how well they are doing. However, there are differences in the way teachers use marking in different classes. For example, some teachers provide written comments so that pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. However, this good practice is not consistent across the school. Pupils are not routinely given the time to read and use their teacher's comments to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and welcoming. They are keen to learn and enjoy school. Pupils attend regularly and arrive on time to lessons and assemblies.
- Relationships between pupils are good. Pupils chat sociably and sensibly while eating their lunch in the dining hall and enjoy playing together during break times. They play safely and are aware of the needs of others. Almost all parents feel that pupils are well behaved in school.
- Pupils co-operate well with each other when working in groups and listen to their teachers, and to other adults, carefully. Generally pupils are capable of sustaining concentration and focus when working in groups and when working alone. Occasionally, however, a few pupils lose concentration and start chatting quietly to their neighbours during lessons, particularly when the work set is not sufficiently challenging. While not disruptive, this slows their progress.
- Discrimination is not tolerated. Pupils know about different forms of bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying, but say that this is rarely a problem in school. School records support this view. The very few incidents of bullying are followed up promptly by the school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know about the potential risks of using the internet and about what they can do to help to keep themselves safe. Pupils like to know that they can go to the 'Worry Club' and the 'Prayer Club' if they have any concerns or if they want to talk to an adult. They told inspectors that any worries are sorted out quickly by adults. Almost all parents who completed Parent View feel that their children are happy, safe and well looked after.
- Members of the school council are proud of the part they play in helping to improve aspects of school life, such as increasing the number of activities available to use during playtimes.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher quickly and accurately identified aspects of teaching and pupils' achievement which needed improving when she joined the school. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher. Her vision for the future of the school is understood and shared by staff and governors.
- Checks on the quality of teaching and on pupils' achievement are regular, so any pupils falling behind are quickly identified and extra help provided. However, while middle leaders have an accurate view of pupils' achievement in a particular key stage, their knowledge of teaching and learning across the school is less well developed.
- Effective performance management procedures are in place for all staff members. Salary progression is effectively linked with pupils' achievement over time.
- The school is committed to promoting equal opportunities for all pupils. Pupils learn about a range of religions and talk with respect about different beliefs and customs. Many think deeply about complex aspects of modern life, such as poverty and charity.

■ The school makes good use of sports funding. Many more pupils have tried new sports over the past year than previously. The number of pupils representing the school in borough events is the highest on record. Clear procedures to check the use of funds ensure that leaders know funding is improving pupils' experience of physical education.

■ **The governance of the school:**

– The role played by governors in securing improvements in the school has developed rapidly in the past year. The Chair of the Governing Body told inspectors, 'We know a lot more about the school this year than we did last year.' Governors have a clear view of the school's aims because they work closely with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They know how well pupils are achieving because reports of pupils' progress are more regular than before. This means that discussions and questions during governors' meetings are more focused. The local authority has provided training that is tailored to the needs of the governing body. This has successfully developed governors' knowledge about how well the school is performing in relation to other schools nationally. Governors with responsibility for different subjects visit the school regularly. They have good first-hand knowledge of the school's working. Governors know how performance management is used to check the quality of teaching in the school. For example, they know how teachers are being supported to improve their practice and how salary progression is used to reward good practice. Governors regularly discuss how well additional funds are being used to improve pupils' achievement. They have a secure overview of the school's finances. Safeguarding arrangements are rigorous and meet statutory 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	137856
Local authority	Kingston-upon-Thames
Inspection number	444318

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	493
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pippa Young
Headteacher	Elizabeth Cahill
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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