

St Mary's RC Primary School

Hemming Drive, Eccles, Manchester, M30 0FJ

Inspection dates 9–10 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils reach above average standards in English and mathematics by the time they leave the school in Year 6. A greater proportion of most able pupils reach above average standards than is the case nationally. Pupils in this school make greater progress than in most schools and their achievement is outstanding.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve higher standards in English and mathematics compared with similar pupils nationally.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make excellent progress from their various starting points.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make an excellent start to their education and reach above age-related expectations by the time they start in Year 1.
- Teaching and learning are outstanding and consequently, all groups of pupils make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The curriculum is rich and exciting and pupils participate well in an excellent range of activities within school and beyond, including an extensive programme of educational visits.
- Excellent use of the primary school sport funding ensures pupils have high quality opportunities to participate in a range of sports.
- Pupils show respect for each other and for adults and their behaviour is exemplary.
- Pupils' safety is outstanding and they say that they feel safe and well cared for in school.
- The school makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are many opportunities for pupils to take part in prayer or quiet reflection on important issues, such as their hopes for themselves during the next school year.
- The headteacher is determined to ensure that the school offers pupils the best education possible. Along with other leaders, managers and governors, she has ensured that standards continue to rise by improving the quality of teaching.
- Senior leaders use data and information about what pupils know and can do very effectively to help pupils to make rapid progress. They have identified a need to help subject leaders gain a deeper understanding of the use of these data so they can continue to raise standards in their subjects.
- Training opportunities to improve further the quality of teaching are regular and teachers are keen to keep improving their practice.
- The governing body makes regular checks on how well pupils are achieving to ensure that every group makes excellent progress during their time in the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 part-lessons taught by nine different teachers. Of these, two lessons were observed jointly by the lead inspector and the headteacher. In addition, the lead inspector observed the headteacher giving feedback to staff.
- The inspectors met with two groups of pupils, talked with pupils informally at break and lunchtime and listened to a group of Key Stage 1 pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, including the vice-chair, a representative from the local authority, senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers.
- The inspectors took account of the views of 36 parents from the online questionnaire (Parent View). In addition, one inspector talked to several parents prior to the start of the school day.
- The school's work was observed and inspectors looked at a number of documents, including safeguarding records, the school's improvement plan, the school's data for tracking pupils' progress, reports on pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching, teachers' planning and work in pupils' books.

Inspection team

Andree Coleman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elaine Watson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. The proportion of those who speak English as an additional language is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below the national average.
- A below average proportion of disadvantaged pupils is eligible for support through pupil premium funding. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- In 2013, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop further subject leaders' skills in using data and information about what pupils know and can do in order to continue to raise standards.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is quietly uncompromising in her pursuit of excellence. Through her very high expectations, she encourages and guides her staff expertly to ensure that pupils receive the best quality of education possible. Staff members respond well to guidance and training and this has brought about the improvement in the quality of teaching which is now outstanding. The headteacher is extremely well supported by other senior leaders, managers and the governing body.
- There is a strong culture of support and a continuous drive for improvement. An equal priority is given to pupils' well-being and enjoyment of school, alongside their successful achievement in a wide range of subjects.
- Excellent procedures are in place to check regularly on pupils' progress and attainment. Senior leaders use this information and data on pupils' achievement very well to pinpoint the skills and knowledge pupils need to improve in order to make rapid progress. Although subject leaders are knowledgeable and very committed to driving up standards, they do not yet demonstrate well enough skills in using data to help to raise standards further.
- The school is very well prepared for the changes to the curriculum and is adding to an already well-planned and exciting curriculum for pupils.
- Regular and extensive staff training ensures that pupils are safeguarded extremely well. All appropriate checks are made on visitors to the school and on those who work with pupils. Pupils are extremely well cared for and the headteacher and staff are most vigilant.
- There is excellent communication with parents; all of the parents who talked with an inspector spoke highly of the school. All of those who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, said that they would recommend the school to another parent.
- The school has evaluated the use and impact of the primary school sport funding. More pupils are reaching higher performance levels in physical education and the school has had much greater success in inter-school sports competitions this year. Pupils talk confidently about the importance of healthy lifestyles and take part in the wide range of sports on offer.
- The local authority has given appropriate light-touch support to this school. In addition, the school has had effective support from an independent external consultant.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governance of the school is outstanding. Rigorous and regular checks are made on the quality of teaching and on pupils' achievement. These have been successful as shown by the improved quality of teaching since the last inspection and the above average standards reached by pupils. Governors are committed to tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity and, as a result, all groups of pupils, such as disadvantaged pupils, pupils with English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make outstanding progress. Excellent and comprehensive procedures are in place to check on the performance of all staff. Rewards are given to teachers only where pupils' progress is good or better and underperformance is not tolerated. Members of the governing body know the school very well; they have a good understanding of school data and give freely of their time to both support the school and to challenge the headteacher and staff to further raise standards.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Behaviour in lessons and around school is exemplary. Pupils show great respect for adults and for each other. Very high quality assemblies make a strong contribution to pupils' understanding of how to behave. An example of this was seen by an inspector when, during assembly, pupils thoughtfully reflected on what it means to be a good citizen. Pupils are developing an excellent understanding of how to make a positive contribution to life in modern Britain.
- Relationships are of the highest quality between staff and pupils and between pupils. Staff members are kind and encouraging and pupils respond very well to this, showing a desire to meet the high expectations that adults hold. In the school hall at lunchtime, pupils are relaxed and get on well with each other and there is a calm atmosphere. On the playground, older pupils were observed playing very well with younger pupils.
- Pupils speak very highly of each other and say how friendly and kind the children are in school. They say that they all get on well together.

- Pupils take care of the school environment; there is no litter and cloakrooms are tidy. They take a pride in their work as shown by the quality of work in their books. In lessons, pupils settle quickly and are well-motivated by interesting activities which help them to learn. In lower Key Stage 2, pupils were enthused to write their own poems having closely examined published poems which gave them inspiration to write.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Clear and effective policies are in place to safeguard pupils. School records show that pupils are extremely well safeguarded by vigilant staff.
- Pupils understand the different types of bullying that exist and can talk confidently about how to keep themselves safe, especially when using the internet. They understand what is meant by cyber-bullying and homophobic bullying and say that they would report it to an adult if it happened to them.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school and this is reflected in their attendance rates which are above average.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Pupils make outstanding progress in English and mathematics and across a range of subjects because of the consistently high quality of teaching throughout the school. The teaching of reading is particularly effective. Year 2 pupils who read to an inspector were confident and enthusiastic about reading. They used a variety of strategies to work out unfamiliar words including using their knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make). Pupils read with a good pace and with strong expression in their voices.
- Pupils are confident learners because they are clear about what their teachers expect from them. They are keen to improve their own work as shown by pupils in upper Key Stage 2 who took some direct speech and added more adventurous vocabulary and punctuation to make it much more interesting and exciting. They then read out their dialogue using great expression and interesting voices for the characters.
- Pupils reach above average standards in writing as the result of excellent teaching. Their books show that they take every opportunity to write within a range of subjects and for different purposes.
- Pupils say that they find lessons interesting and fun. An example of this was seen in Key Stage 2, when pupils were observed outside in the playground rapidly working out the answers to very difficult mental calculations. When successful, these correct answers gave them the opportunity to shoot a ball through a hoop to score a point for their team. Pupils were very well motivated to concentrate, to answer correctly and they enjoyed the activity greatly.
- Teachers give clear and effective feedback to pupils through their marking of work. This generates targets for pupils to work towards. Pupils know and clearly understand their targets and are keen to achieve them.
- Groups of pupils such as disadvantaged pupils, pupils with English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported most effectively by teachers and teaching assistants. Additional teaching sessions are provided for pupils who need help to keep pace with their peers and these ensure that they make excellent progress.
- The most able pupils have specific sessions to help them attain the highest standards, particularly in mathematics. Well-planned work, targeted exactly at the skills and understanding that these pupils need to develop, is successful in helping them to achieve their potential. This was exemplified by the 14% of pupils who achieved the highest level, Level 6, in the 2014 mathematics test in Year 6.
- Teaching promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development extremely well. An example of this was seen in lower Key Stage 2 where pupils were asked to write their hopes for themselves in a prayer. Pupils reflected very thoughtfully on these, considering carefully what to write. Lighted candles and quiet prompting from the teacher created an appropriate atmosphere in which to be reflective and ensured that the activity was very successful.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- School leaders promote equality of opportunity extremely well and, from their various starting points, all groups of pupils make outstanding progress. These groups include disadvantaged pupils, pupils with English as an additional language, most able pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Rates of progress are consistent throughout the school with pupils making excellent progress in every key stage.
- Standards in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 are above average. Unvalidated school data show that almost all pupils achieve at least the expected standards in reading, in writing and in mathematics.
- In Key Stage 1, a broadly average proportion of the most able pupils achieves above average standards in

reading, writing and mathematics. This represents excellent progress from their low starting points on entry to Year 1. At Key Stage 2, a much greater proportion of most able pupils achieves above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and in English grammar, punctuation and spelling than is the case in most schools.

- Pupils achieve particularly well in reading. Effective teaching of phonics ensures that most pupils achieve the required standard in the Year 1 phonics test. In Key Stage 1 in 2014, from low starting points at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage for this cohort, pupils achieved broadly average standards in reading. In Key Stage 2 in 2014, all pupils achieved at least the expected standard in reading with almost three-quarters reaching above average standards.
- School data from 2014 show that all pupils made at least the progress expected of them from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics with more than half making rapid progress. Furthermore, a greater proportion of disadvantaged pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, made better-than-expected progress when compared to their peers. In 2013, disadvantaged pupils did not reach such high standards as other groups of pupils in this school. They were approximately two terms behind in reading, writing and mathematics, although this gap is narrowing year on year. Disadvantaged pupils in the school achieved higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics than this group of pupils nationally; they were approximately two terms ahead.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make outstanding progress and achieve higher standards in English and mathematics compared with these groups in all schools.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children make an excellent start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage from their various starting points. Children's levels of skills and knowledge vary greatly from year to year. This year, approximately one third of children joining the school are at an early stage of learning to speak English. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's achievement is outstanding. They make rapid progress as the result of carefully planned and interesting activities which support their learning exceptionally well. This is particularly so for children who speak English as an additional language who are helped to learn quickly to speak, read and write in English.
- The teaching and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage make an excellent contribution to children's spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. An example of this was seen with children creating a display about the creation of the earth. A teaching assistant talked to the children about various parts of the world, such as the land and the sea and her very effective questioning and the resultant discussion helped children to explain their thoughts and reflect upon the world in which they live.
- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding and ensures that children enjoy school and make excellent progress. Standards in all areas of learning over the last three years have risen rapidly and, in 2014, three-quarters of children reached, or exceeded, the standard expected of them. Nationally, in 2013, only approximately half of children of this age did so. Excellent assessment procedures are in place to ensure that all groups of children achieve equally well.
- From the very beginning of the school year, routines and expectations for children's excellent behaviour are established. All adults make their high expectations very clear and, as a result, children behave extremely well and listen to, and follow, instructions from adults. Children are happy and settled in the Early Years Foundation Stage and show great enthusiasm for the imaginative and engaging activities on offer.
- Excellent use is made of the outdoor area where children use their imagination well. Children in the Reception Year were observed making a make-believe fruit salad in the mud kitchen, whilst children in the Nursery class were creating a pirate treasure map, talking well about what to put on the map. One girl was observed completely absorbed by her role as a 'pirate', tiptoeing around the outdoor area looking for a place to hide her 'pirate treasure'. Other children were observed developing their language and understanding as the result of the discussion with adults and each other. Teaching is highly effective because it is directed at helping children to develop the skills and understanding they need to make rapid progress in all areas of learning.

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	105953
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	448290

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Deborah Henley
Headteacher	Julie Forshaw
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2009
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