

Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School

East Row, North Kensington, London W10 5AW

Inspection dates

6–7 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Pupils' achievement is not as good in Key Stage 2 as it is in Key Stage 1. Gains in reading in the early years and Years 1 and 2 have not been built upon effectively in the rest of the school. Attainment in reading at the end of Year 6 has been below the national average in recent years.
- In tests at the end of Year 6 in 2014, progress in reading for several groups of pupils was below national figures.
- Rates of progress in other year groups in Key Stage 2 are variable in writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good in all year groups. Work is sometimes too easy for the more able pupils, slowing their progress.
- Books are marked regularly but pupils are not yet consistently following the advice that they are given about steps to improve their mathematics and English work.
- Leaders and managers have not yet secured sustained improvements in achievement and teaching.
- Leaders have identified groups of Key Stage 2 pupils who need support to make more rapid progress. They will not check until later in the autumn term to see how this support has helped to improve pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Progress in the current Year 6 is good in mathematics because teaching has been reorganised and is now effective. In national tests, some pupils last year attained the highest possible levels.
- The linking of sounds to letters (phonics) is taught effectively in Key Stage 1 and higher than average proportions of pupils reach the required level.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe.
- Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very strong. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and experience high quality musical and cultural activities.
- School governors challenge as well as support the school's work. They actively promote democratic values by engaging with the school council.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years classes because good teaching supports rapid development of skills, including phonics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 23 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 16 teachers. In addition they observed pupils' activities at breaks and lunchtimes.
- One lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher who also accompanied an inspector on an additional visit to look at pupils' reading records in a series of classes. The deputy headteacher accompanied an inspector on a series of visits to classes and the assistant headteacher joined an inspector scrutinising pupils' workbooks.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body, and the school's senior and middle leaders. Discussions took place between an inspector and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 31 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as informal discussions with parents and carers. The views of the staff were taken into account through meetings and consideration of the 13 responses to staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed their choice of reading books.
- The school's own attainment and progress records for the current year as well as previous academic years were scrutinised in addition to published information on pupils' achievement. Planning documents were also examined.
- Records relating to pupils' safety and welfare were examined. Behaviour logs and attendance records were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Patricia MacLachlan, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Olsen Davis	Additional Inspector
Robert Eyre-Brook	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium (extra money provided by the government for disadvantaged pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and for looked after children) is above the national average. About half of all pupils are supported by this additional funding.
- The largest ethnic groups of pupils are of White British and Other White heritage. Other sizeable groups include Caribbean, African and other mixed heritage groups.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- In 2014, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery and two Reception classes. All children attend on a full-time basis.
- Since its previous inspection the school's leadership team has changed considerably. The then associate headteacher is now the substantive headteacher. A deputy headteacher left the school at the end of the summer term 2014. At this time an assistant headteacher was appointed to lead on mathematics and a new senior leader in charge of Key Stage 2 English joined this September.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment in reading in Key Stage 2 by giving pupils more opportunities to reflect upon and discuss with others their responses to the texts that they have read.
- Improve the overall quality of teaching to at least good by:
 - making sure that all teachers check that marking is bringing about improvements to pupils' work, for example in checking that corrections have been made
 - providing frequent opportunities for teachers to discuss the most effective marking methods and checking that approaches used are of consistent quality across the school.
- Improve the management of teaching, so that the quality of teaching and learning improves quickly, by:
 - checking that activities for more able pupils are challenging enough
 - enlisting subject leaders in making more frequent checks on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress, particularly those who have been identified as making slow progress in Years 3 to 5.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because pupils are not making consistently good progress in Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainment declined in reading in 2013. Attainment and progress in reading for many groups were also significantly below national expectations in 2014. Leaders and managers have therefore not been effective enough in ensuring good achievement.
 - A galvanised governing body and extended leadership team have begun to improve upon this, particularly in the current Year 6. Nonetheless, pupils' progress remains uneven across different classes and some aspects of teaching require improvement.
 - Subject leaders, new to their roles, are involved in training staff and checking pupils' progress in mathematics, reading and writing. However, their actions have not yet made a consistent impact on pupils' progress. While the mathematics leader can demonstrate that recent changes to teaching in Year 6 have speeded up pupils' progress, subject leaders are not yet able to show improvements in other years.
 - Staff performance is managed methodically and pay rises are only awarded if teachers help pupils to meet their progress targets. The headteacher has not shied away from difficult conversations and tackles underperformance decisively.
 - The school's improvement plan shows that leaders have accurately identified the areas requiring development. New systems for teaching reading are being introduced. It is too early to judge the impact of this work and the improvement plan does not identify precise timescales for checking the impact of actions.
 - School leaders are making effective use of additional funding to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, with the most marked impact being in lower Key Stage 2.
 - Very strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is planned in the subjects and activities offered to pupils. Pupils are helped to understand British democratic values because pupils convey their views to the school council who report regularly to the governing body. The council is involved in planning improvements to the school's facilities.
 - The curriculum widens pupils' cultural horizons with, for example, an international evening and Bollywood dancing to mark Diwali. Drama has included performances in Year 5 with the Royal Shakespeare Company and specialist dance teaching helped the school to win borough competitions. Links are made with other faiths and joint choral activities with a local Church of England school enhance pupils' understanding of diversity. Award-winning participation in prestigious choral performances at the Royal Albert Hall, Royal Opera house and on BBC Radio Three develops cultural understanding and builds pupils' social confidence.
 - Safeguarding systems meet statutory requirements and policies are reviewed regularly. Leaders promote equality and tackle any potential discrimination effectively.
 - The additional government sports funding has been used to give pupils additional physical education lessons. Teachers have been trained to run additional after-school clubs that are well attended and the school is now entering more sports competitions.
 - The local authority assists the school by checking teachers' assessment of work and leaders' evaluation of teachers' performance. Governors make extensive use of the local authority's training programmes.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Members of the governing body know the standards of achievement and the quality of teaching in the school. This is because governors ask challenging questions about pupils' performance when leaders report to them. The governing body has improved its effectiveness by working with the local authority advisers to organise a focused training programme. 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 that in other schools. They make regular themed visits to the school to make sure that reported improvements are taking place. Governors understand the link between teachers' pay increases and pupils' progress and have set up a pay oversight committee. Governors are aware of what support has been provided to improve teaching and if there has been any underperformance. Checks are made that additional funding is spent on the intended groups and governors hold school leaders to account for the impact of spending on pupils' performance. Families of different faiths are welcomed as 'a privilege and a responsibility'; their cultures and festivals are celebrated by the whole school community. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. The budget is carefully managed to support the school improvement plan.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their attitudes to learning are positive because teachers and other adults encourage them. Pupils respond well to the school's reward system and have been involved in drawing up their 'golden rules' based on Matthew's gospel.
- Pupils cooperate well with each other in lessons. Behaviour is good, rather than outstanding, because it is not exemplary across the school.
- Pupils behave courteously outside classrooms. Older pupils take responsibility around the school to help others to behave sensibly and play well together keeping to their respective zones in the playground.
- Typically, pupils conduct themselves well around the school. This is because all staff set high expectations. Positive values are emphasised through a reward system that gives points towards treats and 'golden time', where pupils are allowed to choose their favourite activities, for good behaviour.
- The absence rates for those pupils who find it difficult to attend school regularly have declined over recent years. This is because of more effective checking and following up of absences with parents and carers. Attendance over the past three years has been moving nearer to the national average. Exclusions have not been used because the management of behaviour is increasingly effective.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils speak appreciatively of the way that they are looked after. 'Playtime, clubs, lessons and teachers are all good here' is a typical comment.
- Pupils have a good awareness of personal safety, including using the internet, because it is explained well in lessons and 'cyber-bullying week'.
- Pupils understand what bullying means and they say that although it does occur, staff can be relied upon to help them to overcome any problems quickly. This is borne out by school records that show decreasing numbers of bullying incidents over the past two years.
- The majority of the parents and carers who responded to Parent View believe that the school provides a safe and caring environment. Some concerns were expressed to inspectors about the traffic outside the premises but the school has responded well with road safety assemblies and by appointing 'junior traffic safety officers' to remind pupils to keep themselves safe.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it has not promoted consistently good progress since the previous inspection, especially in reading in Key Stage 2.
- The school's own evaluation of the quality of teaching shows that some in the past was not good enough to help pupils make enough progress. Teaching has now improved as a result of focused leadership and support but pupils are not yet making sustained progress in all years and subjects.
- Marking is regular and many teachers make helpful comments on pupils' work. However, detailed comments by teachers about what pupils should do next to improve their work are not always followed up because their corrections are not consistently checked. This limits the impact of teachers' guidance on pupils' learning and progress.
- Teaching is not always effective in literacy. Teachers do not always set high expectations for extended writing and as a result, progress is variable. For example, in book samples seen by inspectors there were instances where poor presentation and careless mistakes were not corrected. In addition, the school's handwriting policy is not currently applied consistently. Leaders are aware of this and have made consistent marking a focus for their own regular book scrutiny activities.
- Tasks in mathematics are designed to challenge the pupils' thinking and to stimulate discussion about how to solve problems. When teachers plan activities for pupils with different levels of attainment and set high expectations, then all pupils make progress. For example, in a Year 6 activity on classifying whether certain mathematical hypotheses were always, sometimes or never true, pupils' enthusiasm was stimulated and lively discussions were heard about evidence for their proposed answers. Adults asked well-focused questions to encourage individuals to express themselves in more detail. A small group worked with a teacher who supported pupils to use counters and try an operation with at least three different variables before deciding upon their answers. However, not all teachers are as effective in questioning pupils or promoting progress for all ability groups in their classes.

- Pupils who find the work difficult benefit from skilful support in class that helps them to make progress. The pupils who are capable of attaining higher levels are sometimes set extension challenges but these are not always hard enough to stretch their capabilities.
- Reading is encouraged across all year groups. Leaders have provided well-equipped reading areas to help pupils select books for reading sessions in school and at home. Pupils' reading is then checked weekly by teachers in detailed record books and lessons for comprehension skills are now scheduled explicitly. Nonetheless, the strong start made in reading in the early years and Key Stage 1 has not been built upon rapidly enough in Key Stage 2 to promote and sustain older pupils' progress. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to reflect on the texts they have read and discuss their views with others.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement is not good because in recent years attainment in reading fell below the nationally expected standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils are not helped to build on the good start made to developing their reading skills in the early years and Key Stage 1.
- The school's own records show that rates of progress in other Key Stage 2 year groups are variable. This is because recent changes to compensate for weaker teaching in the past have not yet made a consistent impact on pupils' achievement.
- Progress information on all pupils is checked regularly by leaders. Class teachers are now fully aware of the pupils who will need additional help in order to make good progress. However, with the exception of mathematics in Year 6, this is not being checked frequently enough to identify whether or not this additional support is effective.
- More able pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and the proportions of pupils reaching the higher level by the end of Year 2 is rising in all subjects. In the current Year 6, the more able pupils are now making better progress, given their starting points, in reading and mathematics. However, in Year 4 and Year 5 fewer of the more able pupils are making good progress. There is not yet enough emphasis on giving hard work in a range of subjects to the more able pupils in these year groups to help them attain at the highest levels.
- School records show that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making the same or even better progress as their classmates. Pupils from different ethnic groups make similar progress, as do those who speak English as an additional language. The well-focused training that has been given to staff who support small groups is now beginning to impact on the progress of these pupils.
- Additional government funding is used to run small-group activities for disadvantaged pupils and their families in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2014, disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 1 made good progress. By the end of Year 6, disadvantaged pupils were approximately eight months behind pupils nationally in reading and mathematics although the gap in writing and grammar was four months or less. Their attainment was broadly in line with that of their classmates in reading, about four months behind in writing and a year behind in mathematics. In the current Years 4 and 5 the funds have been used particularly effectively and gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their classmates have either narrowed or the disadvantaged pupils have actually outperformed their classmates.

The early years provision

is good

- Children join the Nursery and Reception classes with skills that are generally below the levels typical of three- and four-year-olds. About half the pupils every year join Reception from settings other than the school's Nursery. As a result of good teaching, above average proportions have achieved a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year and were well prepared to begin Year 1. This represents good progress.
- Parents and carers are visited before their children enrol and are encouraged to help their children to learn by joining learning workshops.
- Children behave well and quickly adjust to the routines established by kindly staff who help to defuse any minor disagreements.
- Staff help children make good progress though a range of interesting activities. Questioning is used effectively to help children develop their reasoning skills and powers of self-expression. The linking of sounds to letters (phonics) is well taught and enables children to make good progress in reading.

- Leadership and management of the early years provision are good because teaching and support for children are effective. Senior leaders are aware of the need to provide training for Early Years staff in assessing children's progress and tracking assessment information frequently.

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	100499
Local authority	Kensington and Chelsea
Inspection number	443976

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	392
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Max De Lotbiniere <input type="checkbox"/>
Headteacher	Kristy Davis
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 June 2011
Telephone number	020 8969 0321
Fax number	020 8964 3122 <input type="checkbox"/>
Email address	info@st-marys.rbkc.sch.uk

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