

St Marie's Catholic Primary School and Nursery

Merttens Drive, Rugby, CV22 7AF

Inspection dates 11–12 February 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and his senior colleagues have introduced innovative and effective ways of checking on pupils' progress. This has enabled them to identify quickly any who are falling behind and make sure they receive the support they need.
- Governors have greatly improved their ability to hold leaders to account for their success in improving teaching. They have a detailed knowledge of how well pupils are achieving and of the quality of teaching.
- Pupils' achievement has improved since the last inspection and they make good progress across the school. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils in the current Year 6 are making good progress in developing their writing and mathematical skills because of the effective teaching they receive in these subjects.
- Children in the early years generally make good progress because of good teaching and well-planned activities that develop children's enthusiasm for learning.
- Actions taken by school leaders including governors have led to the development of a strong new team of staff and much improved teaching in a short period of time. They have improved pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, especially in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They behave well and have good attitudes towards learning. Members of staff form good relationships with them and set a good example.
- The innovative curriculum helps the school promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Its promotion of British values and tolerance for others is good.
- Pupils take great pride in the presentation of their work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not consistently good because the support given to pupils by teaching assistants is not always effective enough and their work is not sufficiently checked by teachers.
- Occasionally, lessons are not interesting enough to fully engage, motivate and challenge pupils.
- Some middle leaders are new to their roles and have not fully developed ways in which to accelerate progress in their areas of responsibility.
- The provision for outdoor learning in the early years is limited and sometimes constrains children's learning and physical development.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 20 lessons and an awards assembly held in the church. They talked to pupils about their progress and the work in their exercise books. Four of the visits to classrooms were undertaken jointly with either the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors observed them reporting back to the teachers on their findings regarding the quality of their teaching and pupils' learning and achievement.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes were observed in lessons, an assembly, playtimes, when they moved around the school, during lunchtime, and at the beginning and end of the school day. The inspectors spoke with pupils about their perceptions of the school.
- Inspectors reviewed the work in pupils' writing, mathematics, science and other exercise books, and heard some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with members of staff, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and five other governor representatives. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took into account the 35 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and parents' written comments. They held informal discussions with a random sample of parents.
- The inspectors considered the views expressed in the survey responses from 20 members of staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, which included: the school's checks on how well it is doing and its plans for improvement; evidence about how teachers are set targets to improve pupils' progress; and records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching. They considered: minutes of meetings of the governing body and the senior leadership team; information about pupils' progress over time; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Terrance Mortimer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Marie Conway

Additional Inspector

Lynda Morgan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Marie's is a much larger than average-sized primary school.
- The school runs a Nursery provision in the morning and afternoons, and children attend this part-time. Children attend the Reception classes full-time.
- Half of the pupils are from White British backgrounds with the other half from various minority ethnic backgrounds. Significant numbers of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is around the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school runs a breakfast club which is managed by the governing body, which formed part of this inspection. There is also an after-school club, run by a private provider, which was not part of the inspection.
- Since the school was last inspected, there have been significant changes in staffing and senior leadership. Over half of the current teaching staff have arrived at the school in the last 12 months. The current headteacher took up post in September 2014. There have also been several changes affecting the membership and organisation of the governing body. The school has also completed a re-building programme following a fire.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching by ensuring that:
 - activities are consistently well planned so that they always motivate and challenge pupils
 - teachers check more effectively, the quality of the contribution made by teaching assistants and other adults in the classroom so that the pupils in their charge make faster progress.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing the role of middle leaders so that they play a more consistent and effective part in helping pupils to achieve well in their areas of responsibility.
- Improve the provision for outdoor learning in the early years, to further develop children's physical development.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher has established a new senior leadership team with clear terms of reference and re-defined responsibilities. He has built on the good initial work done by the previous acting headteacher who is now the deputy headteacher. This has enabled the school to cope with the many changes in staffing it has recently experienced.
- Staff and governors form a cohesive team who passionately share the headteacher's ambition for the school's pupils and for their achievement. As a result, the school is moving forward rapidly. Senior leaders and governors are realistic in their evaluations of the school's effectiveness, strengths and priorities for improvement.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They speak extremely positively of the headteacher and staff, saying that they are approachable and know pupils well as individuals. They are very supportive of the changes made by the current leadership. The school creates and maintains strong links with families of children as risk of not doing as well and for those who speak English as an additional language. This contributes to pupils' good progress and achievement.
- The headteacher has completed a rigorous audit of the school and has acted to address previous shortcomings. His drive and determination, supported well by the deputy headteacher, have contributed considerably to improvements in teaching, assessment and curriculum development. Governors, parents and staff are wholly supportive of the focus on raising achievement. The morale of the staff is high and they appreciate the good support and guidance he has given them.
- Inadequate teaching has been challenged and has resulted in marked improvements in the quality of teaching. Disappointing results at the end of Year 2 in 2014 were the result of previous inaccuracies in teachers' assessments. Attainment is now rising rapidly and the school is back on course to exceed previous levels of attainment in both key stages.
- Accurate evaluation of data identifies appropriate priorities and informs the improvement plan. Checks on teachers' assessments are helping them to target work more accurately to improve pupils' performance.
- Teachers have individual targets that clearly focus on improving pupils' progress. Good levels of support for teachers and well-planned training have underpinned improvements to the quality of teaching. Decisions about teachers' salaries are directly linked to evidence of their impact on pupils' achievement.
- Leaders make sure pupils have plentiful opportunities through the curriculum to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. The school encourages pupils to show respect for each other and to recognise that each pupil is unique and should be appreciated for themselves. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain, as leaders ensure they have a good understanding of British values, such as democracy. Pupils understand the need for rules and expectations and the benefits they bring, and have respect for different faiths and beliefs.
- The curriculum is planned to engage and interest pupils in their learning. The school has introduced new initiatives to broaden pupils' writing experiences and these are proving very successful. Pupils now ask if they can write their own blogs and extend their writing skills without being prompted.
- The primary sport and physical education (PE) premium provides additional clubs and activities after school and at lunchtimes. It has also been used to provide additional specialist training for all staff to develop the teaching of PE. As a result, more pupils now take part in competitive sports and pupils enjoy the sports coaching they receive while they are playing at lunchtimes.
- The pupil premium is used effectively to help eligible pupils achieve as well as their classmates. It has been used to support pupils in smaller teaching groups, where necessary, for example, in the 'nurture'

group. These pupils receive effective support and often make better progress than other pupils. Leaders and governors ensure there is no discrimination and everyone has an equal chance to achieve.

- All safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory requirements and are effective. The learning environment is safe and calm, which enables good behaviour and good learning to flourish.
- The headteacher is supported ably by a skilled team of knowledgeable leaders and staff, especially in areas such as inclusion, special educational need, English and mathematics. However, he is fully aware that other subject leaders are not yet contributing enough to the raising of standards by checking pupils' progress and improving the quality of teaching in their subject areas. He has rightly targeted this as a priority for this year.
- The early years is well led and managed. Links with parents of children in the Nursery and Reception classes are good. Parents throughout the school contribute well to their children's learning. Especially in helping them to read.
- The local authority has provided effective support, advice and training. This has helped to improve pupils' achievement, provision in the early years, and the effectiveness of governors.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good knowledge of the quality of teaching and pupils' performance by asking searching questions, receiving regular reports from the senior leadership, and coming into school to see for themselves. They are linked to subjects and areas of the school. They know that staff training has been effective in helping the school to raise standards.
 - Governors receive detailed information on teachers' performance, and have only rewarded teachers for their work if they are satisfied that staff have met their personal targets.
 - Governors know how well the pupil premium and primary school sports funding are used. For example, they know that working alongside professional coaches has strengthened teachers' practice and helped to further develop the health and well-being of pupils.
 - Governors' support for the school and knowledge about pupils' performance are good. They work well with all staff, and work closely with the school to ensure that it maintains its drive to raise standards. Together with senior leaders, governors take care to ensure that the school's arrangements for safeguarding its pupils are effective and meet all statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are really proud of their school. They are well mannered, take good care of each other and show great respect for adults.
- Some pupils who, at times find it difficult to manage their emotions and behaviour, are helped to do so sensitively yet firmly by the adults. As a result, their behaviour improves.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes settle well into the school's routines and expectations. They behave well and learn how to work and play happily together.
- Pupils are keen to learn and they work hard. Their positive attitudes towards their learning can be seen in their high levels of concentration in lessons. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the way their teachers make learning fun, using games and many interesting activities in lessons to help them learn in different ways. One pupil said, 'They are lovely and help me a lot'.
- Pupils enjoy taking on active roles in the school. For example, pupils take responsibility as members of the school council or as 'Beat the bully' buddies, although they acknowledge this is becoming a redundant role because behaviour is now so good.
- Pupils take great pride in the presentation of their work and their books generally. They find the well-

presented displays teachers have place on the walls of their classrooms stimulating, and try to emulate them in the way they present their own work.

- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because, just occasionally, lessons are not interesting enough to fully engage, motivate and challenge pupils. In addition, teaching assistants do not always know how to effectively support pupils' learning.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. The school nurtures them academically and emotionally. As a result, they flourish as individuals within an ethos of tolerance and equality.
- The school encourages pupils to develop a good understanding of prejudice-based bullying of all types, and Key Stage 2 pupils are fully informed about this and other forms of bullying. They say that any such incidents are rare. School records support this view. If incidents do occur, pupils have complete faith that the adults will take prompt action to sort things out quickly. Pupils know that, 'no-one should be treated badly because they are different.'
- Pupils understand the school rules, and pupils say that adults apply these fairly. Pupils have a very good understanding of risk, including those in school and outside. The school's guidance about their personal safety, including when they use the internet and mobile phones helps support them well. This was seen when the pupils completed a task dealing with the dangers of the internet as part of their work with computers.
- Staff are well trained and know how to keep pupils safe. Procedures for checking the suitability of staff and visitors are robust. The school has a detailed policy and has provided training which instructs all adults to be alert to the dangers of radicalisation and respond appropriately to concerns, should they arise.
- The school has recently implemented more rigorous procedures to follow up on absence and poor punctuality. This includes the weekly award of two giant bears called Webb and Ellis, in assemblies held in the church for the best class attendance in each key stage. These procedures have helped improve attendance so that it is now in line with national figures, and to reduce persistent absence.

The quality of teaching is good

- The work in pupils' books and their rates of progress reflect the good teaching they now receive across the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise, which they use effectively to provide a wide range of activities that promote pupils' literacy, reading and numeracy skills.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have improved teaching throughout the school by addressing recognised areas of weaker teaching. Teaching now caters more consistently for pupils from all backgrounds. Teachers establish very positive relationships with pupils and expect their behaviour to be at least good. This improvement in teaching is the main reason for pupils' current good progress and rapidly rising standards.
- Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. A good range of activities are used that develop children's skills abilities well. Here and in the rest of the school, teachers make sure that learning is interesting.
- Reading is promoted strongly throughout the school and pupils of all ages read well. The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) has been reviewed and strengthened. As a result, more pupils are now achieving the required standard in the screening check in Year 1.
- Writing is taught well. Teachers have introduced new and more exciting ways to encourage pupils to practise their writing skills though the internet and exchanging ideas and successes with other schools. This is helping to extend pupils' writing, especially that of boys, and is also developing pupils' team

working, communication and problem-solving skills.

- The teaching of mathematics is usually good. New systems to assess pupils' achievement have ensured that the schools' approach is applied consistently by all staff. This is improving the standards of the younger pupils. Older pupils are well supported by teaching that is now more tailored to reflect pupils' varying abilities than was previously the case.
- Most teachers use questions effectively to make pupils think carefully. This helps them to learn well because they are encouraged to think through, share and develop their ideas.
- Teachers treat pupils with respect and are interested in what they have to say. As a result, pupils are eager to learn and respond readily to tasks with interest and enthusiasm. Whole-class, group and paired activities are all used effectively to help to increase pupils' confidence and their speaking skills.
- Teaching focuses carefully on the most able pupils in each year group, challenging them with probing questioning and activities that make them think deeply. However, on rare occasions the most able pupils are not challenged enough to ensure they make really rapid progress. In such cases, pupils find tasks too easy or too difficult, because work is not always precisely matched to their capabilities.
- Teachers make regular weekly checks on how well pupils are doing through weekly testing and feedback sessions called 'surgeries'. Teacher assessment is more accurate and systematic. Teachers now plan lessons to address what it is pupils do not know.
- Teachers mark pupils' work on a daily basis and use this information to help them improve. Most pupils respond thoughtfully to their teachers' comments and take advantage of the tasks suggested to them by their teachers to improve their work.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs generally make good progress. However, the work of general teaching assistants, who do not have the one-to-one direction for pupils with special needs, is not always directed well enough by teachers and is not always effective. This slows the development of essential skills, especially in Key Stage 1.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Until this year, children entered the Nursery with particularly weak skills in language, personal, social and emotional, literacy and number. Children make good progress throughout the early years, in their reading, writing, number and shape and space work. Despite making good progress, the children were still below national averages in achieving a good level of development when they left Reception. Writing skills were the least well developed.
- The reasons for previously weak results at Key stage 1 have been identified and resolutely addressed by leaders. Current pupils' progress and attainment are accelerating sharply in reading, including phonics, writing, number and shape and space.
- In the Year 1 reading screening check in 2014, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level was above that of the previous year and the national average. The pupils who did not achieve the standard are now being given effective support. This is leading to rapid improvement of reading across the school.
- In 2014 Key Stage 2 attainment was broadly in line with national averages. Current data shows an improvement from 2012. This improving trend is now consistent across the school. Progress accelerates in Key Stage 2 so that, by the end of Year 6, a growing proportion of pupils are working at levels that are above those expected for their age. This is due to the good teaching and support given to these pupils.
- Achievement in writing is now good. Many pupils make impressive progress and most make good progress in writing throughout the school.

- Pupils also make good progress in mathematics and reading. Any previous difference between the performance of girls and boys in mathematics has been reduced.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are very positive in their approach to learning and make good progress overall. The support they receive is carefully directed and helps them to achieve well, with some making better than expected progress. This success is due to good systems which enable teachers to recognise that pupils may have significant needs much earlier.
- Disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium currently make good progress. The school invests wisely in staffing to ensure these pupils receive the support they need. Consequently, most now achieve as well as, and sometimes better than, their classmates. However, in 2014 disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 were three terms behind their classmates and national averages in mathematics, and one term behind both groups in writing and reading. Current data for Years 5 and 6, show that the gap between disadvantaged and school pupils has closed to less than a term in writing and reading and a term in mathematics, because staff are tracking their progress more closely and providing better support.

The early years provision

is good

- Children join the Nursery with weak skills in language, number and social and emotional development. They make good progress during their time in Nursery and Reception. In 2014 the children were well prepared to enter Key Stage 1.
- The quality of teaching is good. Staff have high expectations and make sure that learning is purposeful and well focused. Staff provide opportunities for children to play and explore and make sure that children are suitably challenged. As a result, children learn quickly and make good progress in all areas.
- Staff make good use of the indoor and outdoor environment. However, the outdoor provision for the early years is rather limited in size and places some constraints on children's physical development especially with large wheeled toys.
- Staff assess and record children's progress regularly and accurately. They use this information to plan activities to extend and challenge them further. As a result, the needs of individual children are well met, and they make good progress. This includes pupils at risk of not doing as well, as well as disadvantaged and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Children are well motivated and show good attitudes to learning in a safe and caring environment. They are proud of their 'learning journeys' (collections of their work and adults comments) and are keen to show any adult what they have succeeded in doing. The early years provision makes a strong contribution to children's physical and emotional health, safety and well-being, as well as to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- There are close links with parents. These ensure that children make a smooth transition to the Reception year and on to Key Stage 1.
- The leadership and management of the early years are good. Leaders have an accurate view of how well children are doing and know what needs to be improved further.

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	136507
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	453455

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	440
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Parish
Headteacher	Dominic McBride
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2013
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