

Maryvale Catholic Primary School

Old Oscott Hill, Kingstanding, Birmingham, B44 9AG

Inspection dates 25–26 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, supported by the governing body, has demonstrated a relentless determination to drive up standards. As a result, teaching and achievement across the school are improving rapidly.
- Leaders have a detailed knowledge of pupils' progress, and act quickly when they identify any shortcomings.
- Although many children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with limited skills in communication, all make good progress and leave ready for Year 1.
- Progress is strongest in reading, including phonics (sounds and corresponding letters), but it has improved also in writing and mathematics and so is good overall.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress, helping them to catch up with pupils nationally.
- Pupils enjoy school, behave consistently well in lessons and outside, and take pride in their work. Their positive attitudes help them to learn.
- The school keeps its pupils safe: staff work tenaciously to promote the well-being of those pupils who are vulnerable.
- Learning opportunities promote pupils' spiritual, moral and social values strongly, including respect for people from all cultural backgrounds.
- Teaching is consistently good: learning is well organised to ensure that pupils receive work that is sufficiently challenging. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' successful learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some activities given to pupils who learn quickly do not always extend and deepen their understanding.
- Although the headteacher has managed staffing turbulence well, subject and other leaders do not yet contribute fully to improving teaching.
- Marking and record keeping in subjects other than English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 do not provide a secure basis for the development of specific skills in those other subjects.
- Teachers often give insufficient attention to arousing intellectual curiosity and ensuring that pupils think hard enough about their work.
- Outdoor play areas, including that provided for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are worn and unimaginative.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 16 lessons, taught by 10 different teachers, and pupils working in smaller groups; five observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher. The inspectors visited form time, and looked at pupils' conduct at break and lunchtime.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, other leaders, class teachers, governors and representatives of local schools working on behalf of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils, both of which were chosen at random, and spoke with many others informally. Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of work in lessons, and scrutinised a selection of books in greater depth. They considered data on pupils' targets and current levels of achievement.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, both electronically and on paper. These included: development plans and their evaluations; records of how leaders check on teaching; minutes of governing body meetings; progress reports to parents; case studies; policies; and records showing how the school supports vulnerable pupils.
- Too few parents completed the online survey, Parent View, for their responses to be taken into account. However, inspectors considered responses to the school's own parental surveys. They spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the 21 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Clair McNeill

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Maryvale Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- There is part-time Nursery provision for pre-school children, with morning and afternoon sessions. Children in Reception attend full time.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is slightly above average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils is disadvantaged and receives support from the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in care.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6.
- Some of the support to the school on behalf of the local authority is provided by two National Leaders in Education (NLEs).
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2013. One assistant headteacher started at the school in September 2014, and several other staff have been appointed since the last inspection.
- The school received a monitoring inspection by Ofsted in June 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that activities set for pupils who work quickly always contribute to the deepening of their understanding so they make more rapid progress
 - challenging pupils to be curious and think harder in lessons so that they achieve more.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - extending the contribution which subject and other leaders make to improving the quality of teaching
 - developing the assessment and recording of pupils' progress at Key Stage 2 in subjects other than English and mathematics so that pupils' skills in those other subjects can be confirmed
 - upgrading the provision for outdoor play and in particular, the area used by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, so their opportunities for learning and recreation improve.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is relentless in setting high expectations for pupils' work and behaviour. She ensures that teachers are accountable for the progress of their classes; she tackles any underperformance promptly. The result is a community ethos fully focused on effective learning, good achievement and effective teaching. Achievement has risen sharply since the last inspection, and continues to improve.
- Senior leaders set ambitious targets for individual pupils, and assiduously monitor their progress. They know exactly how well pupils are learning, and make changes immediately when they see that individuals or small groups are at risk of falling behind. Their evaluation of the school is sound, and provides a secure basis for a lengthy improvement plan with well-considered actions addressing the right priorities. Reports to governors show that progress in completing the plan is regularly reassessed. Consequently, improvement is effected and accurately confirmed.
- Senior leaders monitor teaching closely, set precise targets for staff, and accurately evaluate teachers' performance. They use the results to make decisions about pay rises and promotion. Staff, including teachers at an early stage of their careers, report that staff development is focused and relevant to their needs, and specialist training is readily available. Inspection findings endorsed these positive staff views and found teaching to be consistently good.
- The school's curriculum is broad and enables pupils to achieve well in all subjects. Leaders ensure appropriate attention is given to all seven areas of learning in the early years provision. At Key Stage 2, subjects other than English, mathematics, religious education and science are taught in designated weeks, to provide a clear focus on each subject and to allow for a sustained emphasis on literacy and numeracy at other times. Work in books indicates that this approach is proving successful.
- The school has made an initial response to assessment following the removal of National Curriculum levels, but the recording of progress at Key Stage 2 in subjects other than English and mathematics remains elementary. Pupils' skills in those subjects cannot be shown to be secure.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Good relationships are evident among pupils, and between pupils and adults. Pupils are able to reflect maturely on their own thoughts and feelings, and how they relate to others. The school's ethos ensures that pupils learn to respect different religions and cultures – including Islam. Pupils learn about the British tradition of democracy and the importance of participation in decision making. Consequently, pupils are well prepared, socially and academically, for secondary school and for life in modern Britain.
- The headteacher, with the assistance of the local authority, is managing skilfully the impact of unavoidable staff absence. Subject and other leaders check the quality of teaching, and provide advice to their colleagues on planning learning. Those leaders who are new to their posts have received intensive training, but they are still developing their capacity to improve the quality of teaching. Senior leaders currently shoulder a heavy responsibility.
- Primary sports funding is spent effectively to extend pupils' learning opportunities. A specialist coach has made significant progress towards the school's ambition that all pupils should leave Year 6 able to swim, and provided instruction in gymnastics. Pupils enjoy competing with other local schools, and most take part in regular after-school sport. As a result, they have gained in physical fitness.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity and combats any discrimination by ensuring that all pupils treat each other with respect. Staff work intensively with families to ensure that they fully understand how they can best support their children's educational progress including those who are initially wary of such initiatives. Funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used effectively on strategies to help pupils catch up in their learning, and fully involve them in the wider life of the school. The impact of the spending is seen in the effectiveness of small-group teaching, which in turn has contributed to a sharp improvement in the rate of disadvantaged pupils' progress.

- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements. Staff succeed in gaining the cooperation of other agencies to help vulnerable pupils, demonstrating tenacity when this is not readily forthcoming. As a result, all pupils are well cared for.
- Leaders from other schools have provided a great deal of effective support on behalf of the local authority. In particular, they have led and coordinated staff training, checked on assessments of pupils' work and advised the school on how to achieve a much more purposeful approach to teaching and leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In recognition of the school's greater self-reliance, these leaders have begun to reduce their support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have effective oversight of the school. They make sure that they are well trained, for example, in how to use performance data to compare achievement in the school with that of pupils nationally. They are well informed, so that they are in a position to ask challenging and detailed questions of the headteacher and other senior leaders about pupils' attainment, the quality of teaching in the school and the impact of the pupil premium. Consequently, they hold leaders closely to account for the school's performance.
 - They make sure that the culture of the school promotes respect for people from differing cultural and religious backgrounds.
 - Governors have supported the headteacher in making staffing changes, and ensure she and they together manage the pay and performance of the staff so that only good teaching is rewarded and weaker performance identified and managed. They involve an independent adviser in their management of the headteacher's performance so all decisions concerning her role are well founded.
 - Governors check that all safeguarding requirements are met.
 - They ensure that the school works within its budget.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage set high expectations, and establish a calm and purposeful climate for learning. In the very large majority of lessons across the school, pupils are unfailingly willing to learn, and display an impressive level of concentration. They collaborate well and settle to work promptly. They take a pride in their books, and always present their work neatly. Pupils show respect to adults, and respond promptly to staff requests. Older pupils have a good understanding of how their attitudes can contribute to academic success.
- Pupils take care with their appearance. Pupils' behaviour in the corridors and at social times is sensible and considerate. Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds play happily together. Some younger pupils reported that playground behaviour by a few older pupils is occasionally a little boisterous, although this was not confirmed by inspectors' observations.
- The school accurately records pupils' behaviour and carefully logs any major incidents. There was one incident of a racist nature, which the school took seriously and handled sensitively. The school has used fixed-term exclusion once this academic year.
- Very occasionally, when a teacher or teaching assistant does not insist firmly enough on the school's clear expectations of behaviour, pupils become a little inattentive. Pupils confirm that low-level disruption to lessons is rare.
- Play areas, including that attached to the Nursery classroom, have a tarmac surface and present a worn appearance. There is little play equipment to provide variety or stimulate the imagination for pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe in school, and the vast majority of parents surveyed by the school confirm their children's views. Regular checks are made to ensure the safety of the school site, and inspectors found that the school premises are well maintained and secure.
- Some pupils say that bullying occurs on very rare occasions, but that pupils know who to turn to for support and issues are quickly resolved. One pupil explained that the class was 'like a family', and that pupils understood the need to get along with those who were not their friends.
- Older and younger pupils are taught through assemblies and designated lessons how to protect themselves from different sorts of risk, including those from the internet and those related to road safety.
- The school works effectively with other agencies to protect vulnerable pupils including being alert to any pupils' exposure to extremist views. The school checks all staff rigorously prior to appointment, and those who visit the school site.
- The school has recruited an additional member of staff to work on a part-time basis with families of those who are absent persistently. Attendance has risen markedly as a result, and is currently average.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is characterised by very good relationships between pupils and adults in the classroom and clear expectations for good behaviour. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge, and explain clearly new ideas. They insist on the correct subject-specific terms from the youngest age onwards.
- Learning starts promptly, and timed activities ensure that it moves at a good pace. Pupils are resourceful, taking the initiative to use reference materials and classroom aids when they get stuck. Homework is varied, and makes a good contribution to learning.
- In mathematics, learning is taught in a way that stimulates pupils' interest and clarifies their understanding. For example, pupils reported that they found perimeter easier to understand after measuring parts of the school site. They are encouraged to consider and discuss which approach they should take to a particular situation, as well as practising calculation skills. Numeracy is promoted effectively in other subjects, for example through the drawing of graphs to represent the growth of population in Brazil or where bombs fell during the Battle of Britain.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is consistent and conspicuously well organised. Groups are introduced to new sounds and texts on the basis of their prior understanding. Consequently, they read with confidence and enthusiasm. Those who are at risk of falling behind are introduced to different texts to secure their engagement with reading. Older pupils read widely in school and at home, making good use of the refurbished school library.
- Teachers ensure that pupils generally write in clearly legible, joined handwriting, and pay careful attention to spelling, punctuation and grammar. There are well-considered opportunities both in English lessons and elsewhere for them to write more often, and to express more complex ideas in writing.
- Teachers have benefitted from recent training which has helped them to build effectively on the existing skills of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Teaching assistants are consistently skilful at promoting the learning of groups of all abilities, providing prompts and questions at an appropriate level which allow pupils to grasp the necessary ideas.
- The frequent and useful marking in English and mathematics is consistently good. Teachers identify both routine errors and how pupils can make more substantial improvements to their work, and pupils respond conscientiously. However, in subjects other than English and mathematics, the marking is focused on literacy, and does not explain how pupils can develop their skills in the subject concerned.

- Teachers check regularly on pupils' progress as the lesson proceeds, and respond to the feedback by offering support or extra tasks to the class, small groups or individuals who work quickly. However, these additional tasks are often repetitive and not designed sufficiently carefully to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding in the subject.
- Teachers usually make work sufficiently challenging for pupils of all abilities, including the most able. Sometimes, teachers ask questions which encourage pupils to think deeply and reflect on their own ideas so they learn successfully. However, on other occasions, pupils' understanding is not fully tested and their intellectual curiosity is not stimulated.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school. On entry to the school, a majority of the children have weak communication skills and abilities. Good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables them to catch up rapidly, so that they enter Key Stage 1 broadly in line with national expectations.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 improved in 2014, and it improved considerably at the end of Year 6, rising to above the national average in reading.
- In 2014, pupils in Key Stage 2 made at least the progress expected nationally in all subjects. They made good progress in reading and mathematics, but were a little behind that strong performance in writing. Information presented by the school, checked by leaders from other schools and confirmed by inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' work, shows that the large majority of pupils in all year groups are making good progress. The situation reflects the headteacher's high expectations for what pupils can achieve.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils in each year group is relatively small. The proportion making the progress expected nationally rose in 2014 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils ended Year 6 almost two terms behind other pupils nationally in writing and mathematics. In reading, they were nearly one and a half terms ahead of national results. Pupils left Year 6 approximately two terms behind their classmates in writing and mathematics.
- From their different starting points, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. The school is quick to adopt different strategies if individuals or small groups of pupils are falling behind.
- The most able pupils in each year group typically make good progress because work set for them takes into account the knowledge and understanding they have already attained. Only very occasionally are they not fully challenged. In 2014, Year 6 pupils were ahead of national results in attaining Level 5 or above in reading. An increased proportion of pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to attain the higher levels in mathematics.
- Pupils are highly enthusiastic about their reading, and the school effectively promotes reading at home. Pupils successfully adopt the phonic strategies they have learnt to help them read more challenging texts.

The early years provision is good

- In 2014, the school took decisive action to address weaknesses in the early years provision, including those identified in the monitoring inspection of June 2014. As a result, the quality of teaching and the progress made by children show marked improvement.
- The Nursery and Reception classes are located together, and the new indoor environment is vibrant and supports learning well. Planned activities are adapted to ensure that all areas of learning receive sufficient attention, including expressive arts and design where progress was previously limited.

- On entry to the Nursery, a majority of the children have weak skills and abilities, particularly in communication and language. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and catch up rapidly so that they are ready for Key Stage 1. In the past, the proportion attaining a good level of development was below the national average. However, data confirmed by leaders from other schools, indicate an average proportion of children currently in the Reception class are on track to attain a good level of development.
- The early years setting provides a safe environment. Staff promote children’s moral and social education by establishing clear routines, and managing their behaviour in a consistent, positive manner. As a result, children play and work together well. They respond promptly to adults’ requests. In the lessons observed, they were all highly engaged in their learning.
- The quality of teaching is good. Adults know the children very well, observe them carefully, and skilfully encourage them to extend their understanding and abilities. Children who achieve particularly well are directed towards taking up challenging activities, including in the teaching of phonics where some are taught alongside pupils in Key Stage 1. In more structured sessions, questioning encourages children to reflect and develops their ability to express themselves orally with increasing formality.
- Teachers assess children’s progress frequently and in great detail. Their judgements and the associated evidence are recorded in children’s ‘learning journeys’. These records are discussed at consultation evenings, and parents have the opportunity to add their comments. Consequently, each child’s learning is constantly well directed.
- Leaders have high expectations. They ensure that staff receive appropriate training and work together as a team. They check that assessments are consistent, and identify immediately pupils who may be falling behind. Staff work well with parents to make sure that children make a secure start to school.
- The outdoor environment provides an appropriate range of equipment which pupils use busily, but it lacks the care and attention to detail which are invested in the indoor areas. Many surfaces require repainting.

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	103426
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	434129

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	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne-Marie Butler
Headteacher	Catherine Dalzell
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2013
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