

St Mary's CofE Primary School

Edale Road, Deane, Bolton, BL3 4QP

Inspection dates 12–13 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress overall from low starting points and attain standards above national expectations in reading and writing, and well above in mathematics, by the end of Key Stage 2. Progress accelerates in Key Stage 2 and in this key stage is outstanding in mathematics.
- The nurturing approach in the Early Years Foundation Stage means the children settle quickly and get off to a good start.
- Teaching is good, and some is outstanding. Teachers are enthusiastic and have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers plan in detail to meet the needs and interests of different pupils. Praise and encouragement are used effectively and pupils are keen to learn.
- Positive, caring relationships are a strength of the school. Pupils are happy and feel safe and looked after. They behave well and are polite and considerate. Different groups of pupils get on well together.
- Strong leadership is having a positive impact on teaching and performance. As a result the school has improved since the last inspection. Senior leaders are ambitious for the school and their vision is shared by all staff.
- The curriculum provides pupils with many rich experiences, which develop basic skills and contribute highly effectively to their personal and social development. Children at this school are well prepared for the future.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are variations in teaching and the outstanding practice seen is not yet consistent across the school.
- Progress in Key Stage 1 is not as fast as in the rest of the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons, of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors observed phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) sessions, listened to children read and scrutinised a selection of pupils' workbooks.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, senior leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors took account of the four responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and responses to the most recent parental survey carried out by the school.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including data on children's progress throughout the school, the school's evaluation of its effectiveness, the school development plan, records of monitoring of teaching and learning, records of attendance and behaviour, and documentation in relation to safeguarding and child protection.

Inspection team

Christine Potter, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Marie Cordey	Additional inspector
Maria McGarry	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mary's is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school and is currently undergoing expansion.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average, and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language has increased since the last inspection to approximately 25%. This includes New Commonwealth, Polish and other Eastern European children.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is 45.1%, which is significantly higher than the national average.
- The school provides a breakfast club each morning.
- There is a Children's Centre on the same site run by the local authority which is subject to a separate inspection by Ofsted.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations of attainment and progress.
- The school has a number of awards including Investors in People, Basic Skills Quality Mark and Green Flag Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress in Key Stage 1, so that attainment is consistently in line with, or better than, national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics, by:
 - improving pupils' ability to link letters and sounds
 - increasing the focus on pupils' acquisition of the basic skills of spelling, punctuation and sentence construction
 - ensuring that resources for reading are closely matched to pupils' interests and abilities
 - improving pupils' skills in mental mathematics.
- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or outstanding by:
 - sharing the outstanding practice that exists within the school
 - regularly assessing pupils' progress during lessons and ensuring activities are always closely matched to their differing needs
 - planning and organising resources to contribute more effectively to the desired outcomes
 - ensuring additional adult support is always used as well as it is in the best lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- From starting points on entry to the school that are well below those expected for their age, pupils make good progress overall and attain levels which are above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2 in reading and writing and well above in mathematics.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage a range of stimulating activities ensures that children engage actively in their learning and make good progress, although the majority of pupils are still working at a level below age-related expectations on entry to Key Stage 1. There is a particular focus on the acquisition of social skills that enables children to become more confident and independent, for example, when eating and dressing themselves. Staff place considerable emphasis on developing children's language and communication skills, and skilfully and sensitively encourage them to express themselves, for example, as they share their experiences of family life.
- Despite progress improving in Key Stage 1, with more pupils making and exceeding the expected progress, attainment remains slightly below average. Although pupils enjoy reading some do not apply their understanding of phonics to tackle new words. Evidence in pupils' workbooks shows many express their ideas in words but lack accuracy in spelling, punctuation and sentence structure in their written work. Not all pupils are confident in applying their numeracy skills to mental mathematics.
- Progress accelerates significantly through Key Stage 2. Progress is good in English and in mathematics it is outstanding. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in Year 6 is significantly above the national average. Pupils achieve well in other subjects, and their work demonstrates that they effectively apply their skills in different contexts. Older pupils read widely and are encouraged to develop a sophisticated vocabulary. Pupils use information and communication technology well to support and enhance their learning.
- Effective and detailed tracking systems, early identification of need and timely and well targeted interventions mean that all groups of pupils make similarly good progress, including pupils for whom English is an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The progress of pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is significantly better than similar pupils nationally.
- The school's relentless focus on closing gaps in attainment means that lower-attaining pupils achieve particularly well, with the percentage making better than expected progress being high in comparison to similar pupils nationally.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is usually at least good with some that is outstanding. Evidence from school monitoring and tracking systems and from work in pupils' books clearly indicates that teaching is good over time and is contributing effectively to pupils' good progress.
- In the best lessons, pupils are inspired and motivated to learn within a positive learning environment. Teachers have high expectations and use skilful questioning to enable pupils to develop their thinking and check their understanding. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on and share their experiences. They express their emerging ideas confidently, knowing that their efforts will be valued, such as when Year 6 pupils grapple with deriving complex number facts involving decimals and very large numbers.
- Detailed planning demonstrates clear progression and is used well in most cases to develop

basic skills across the curriculum.

- In most lessons rigorous and accurate ongoing assessment ensures that activities and resources are closely matched to differing needs and abilities. Precisely targeted interventions and the highly skilled support provided by teaching assistants enable all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those for whom the pupils premium provides support, to make good progress.
- Teachers' marking and feedback in pupils' workbooks clearly identifies the strengths in pupils' work. Pupils appreciate this and also the guidance provided about what they need to do to improve their work further. Opportunities for assessing their own work, and that of their peers, are used well.
- In the small number of lessons where teaching is less effective, assessment is not used so accurately to inform planning and deploy additional adults to support different groups of pupils. Activities and resources do not always provide appropriate challenge or contribute so effectively to learning, and pupils' interest wanes. Teachers do not check pupils' understanding of their work frequently enough. In Key Stage 1, teachers do not always give enough attention to ensuring accuracy in basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- Pupils are highly appreciative of their teachers. They feel that lessons are fun and that teachers work hard to make lessons interesting for them. They particularly enjoy enrichment activities and cross-curricular topic work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave considerately and courteously as they move around the school and during break times, both towards adults and each other. They have good attitudes and are keen to learn. However, some low-level disruption occurs in the few lessons where teaching is less effective.
- Pupils from widely different backgrounds get on well together. Bullying and racism are not tolerated and there are no reported incidents. Pupils are confident that any issues will be dealt with quickly and feel that in many cases they can resolve difficulties themselves.
- Positive, caring relationships are a strength of the school and pupils feel safe and well cared for. Parents agree that the school keeps their children safe.
- The school sets high standards for behaviour and has implemented consistent behaviour management strategies. Pupils understand these and perceive them to be fair. As a result behaviour, including that of pupils with specific behavioural needs, is managed well.
- Concerted action by the school, including specific support for individual pupils and their families and liaison with external agencies, has led to improved attendance. The vast majority of pupils attend regularly.

The leadership and management are good

- The commitment and ambition demonstrated by the headteacher, supported by other senior leaders and the governing body, have led to significant improvements in achievement, teaching and behaviour since the last inspection.
 - Rigorous monitoring and self-evaluation processes involve the whole school community. All staff and governors, parents and pupils, contribute to establishing accurate priorities for
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improvement. Detailed action plans are regularly reviewed and amended as necessary.

- The school provides an inclusive environment where there is equality of opportunity, no discrimination and where all children are encouraged and supported to achieve their potential.
 - Links between performance-management systems and professional development opportunities for all staff are strong and form an integral part of the school improvement process. Staff feel a strong sense of accountability and are well supported at all levels.
 - The curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of most pupils although in a few lessons this is not always successful. Cross-curricular links and the emphasis on developing pupils' oral language skills contribute to their good progress. The enrichments provided, which are extremely popular with parents and pupils alike, are a particular strength. Well planned school trips and residential visits to France provide meaningful experiences for the pupils and develop their confidence. The importance attached to developing character traits such as determination, resilience and empathy makes an exceptional contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepares them very well for the future.
 - The school works well with parents and positive feedback shows how much they appreciate what the school does for their children. Information leaflets, workshops and parents' evenings provide effective guidance on how parents can support their children's learning.
 - The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors demonstrate a good understanding of their statutory responsibilities and are highly supportive of the school, including making difficult decisions to improve provision.
 - The governors are committed to school improvement. They are fully involved in self - evaluation and have a positive impact on performance by holding senior leaders to account to ensure that action plans are carried out effectively.
 - Financial resources, including the pupil premium, are managed well. Priority is given to deploying staff and resources to ensure all pupils' needs are met.
 - Effective support and challenge from the local authority has contributed to school improvement since the last inspection.
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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	105203
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	400767

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	280
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Tudor
Headteacher	Mrs Diane Jeffries
Date of previous school inspection	25-26 May 2010
Telephone number	01204 333494
Fax number	01204 333495
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