

The Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School, Grantham

Sandon Road, Grantham, NG31 9AX

Inspection dates

7–8 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Teaching is good throughout the school, with some that is consistently outstanding, such as in Year 1.
- English and mathematics are taught through exciting topics that the pupils clearly enjoy.
- Children make a good start in Reception and pupils now achieve well through to Year 6.
- Progress in reading is outstanding, and almost all pupils are able to read extremely well by the time they leave the school.
- Relationships between all adults and pupils are very good, and teachers have a detailed understanding of the care needs of pupils.
- The strong moral code promoted throughout the school is reflected in pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes in lessons.
- Leadership and management are good, with a strong team including members of the governing body. All are clear about the school's strengths and areas of development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding across all year groups.
- Pupils that can learn faster than others are not always given the chance to do so.
- Although marking in books is undertaken regularly, it does not always tell the pupils how to improve their work.
- The behaviour of the pupils in their free time does not yet match the exemplary behaviour found in lessons.
- Pupils' awareness of how to stay safe on the internet is not strong enough.
- Coordinators of English, mathematics, science and special educational needs do not have enough time to develop and share expertise across the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 20 lessons taught by seven teachers. A joint lesson observation was undertaken with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' books and listened to pupils of different ages read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair and deputy Chair of the Governing Body, senior and middle leaders; and a representative of the local authority was contacted by telephone.
- Inspectors took account of the 33 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View), letters received from parents during the inspection, and feedback from parents interviewed at the school.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Andrew Read, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kathleen Yates

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is increasing and is above average.
- The proportions of disabled pupils, those who have a special educational needs, and those supported through school action and school action plus is above average.
- A below average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, the additional government funding for pupils entitled to free school meals, for children in public care and for pupils with a parent in the armed forces.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the number of outstanding lessons and thus the rate of progress made by all pupils by:
 - ensuring that the outstanding teaching in Year 1 is extended to all year groups
 - ensuring that in every lesson those pupils who are able to learn faster than others have the opportunity to do so when they are ready
 - making sure that marking always shows pupils how to improve their work and what the next steps in their learning should be, with opportunities for pupils to assess their own work.
- Further improve pupils' behaviour and safety by:
 - extending the exemplary behaviour seen in lessons to pupils' free time
 - increasing pupils' awareness of how to stay safe on the internet.
- Strengthen the capacity of all levels of leadership and management to raise standards by:
 - giving subject leaders more time to share their expertise with other staff
 - further developing the role of the special educational needs coordinator
 - improving the quality of information and support given to newly arrived teachers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter Reception at expected levels of development. They make good progress, completing their first year with above expected levels of attainment. For example, by the end of Reception most pupils have good capacity to express themselves effectively, showing a strong awareness of listeners' needs.
- Progress accelerates further in Key Stage 1, where pupils make outstanding progress in English and mathematics in Year 1 and good progress in Year 2. In both year groups pupils make outstanding progress in phonics, and the reading ability of pupils at the end of Year 2 is therefore significantly above national average.
- For most pupils, progress in writing and mathematics is consistently good in Key Stage 2, with a continuation of outstanding progress in reading, leading to attainment in this area that is above national average.
- Higher ability pupils' progress is particularly good in reading. It is not as strong in aspects of science and mathematics, specifically in scientific investigation and application of number.
- Attainment in Key Stage 1 has risen steadily over the last few years as a consequence of the consistently good and outstanding teaching. In Key Stage 2, recent Year 6 cohorts showed a decline in attainment in writing and mathematics. However, following the good progress made by pupils as they have moved through the school, this trend has now been halted and work seen in Year 6 shows that attainment is now above average.
- Over both key stages, pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics when compared with other pupils in the school and all pupils nationally. Progress in mathematics is slightly weaker than English. Targeted use of the additional funding has accelerated progress for these pupils through supplementary resources and improved access to extended learning opportunities.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In particular, these pupils make good progress in reading and writing, which in turn helps them to achieve in other subjects.
- Those pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress. This pattern is repeated across all year groups, but is particularly strong in Reception and Key Stage 1.

The quality of teaching is good

- In Reception and both key stages teaching is good and sometimes outstanding.
- English and mathematics are taught through well-selected and engaging topics, providing a real-life context to pupils' learning. Phonics and reading are particularly well taught, with early identification of any difficulties leading to quick provision of extra support. From Reception upwards, children from families for whom English is not a first language receive very good support in learning English.

- In Year 1 teaching is consistently outstanding. It is based on an excellent understanding of the subjects of the curriculum. In art, for example, pupils were seen to create high quality observational drawings through a carefully structured approach that enabled them to explore techniques at a pace that suited them.
- Teaching in Key Stage 2 is generally good. On occasion more could be done to accelerate the progress of higher ability pupils. For example in a mathematics lesson, pupils who showed clear understanding of the concepts of 'mode' and 'range' could have been given earlier opportunity to independently investigate other forms of 'average'.
- The teaching of science is not currently as strong as other subjects, something the school has recognised and is working to improve. Although some aspects of science teaching are good, investigative science is less well taught.
- Assessment is accurate and data are collected at a whole school level on a half termly basis, and moderated by external agencies to ensure consistency.
- Marking is undertaken regularly. It does not, however, always provide pupils with enough feedback to show them how they might improve their work or encourage self-assessment.
- The deployment of support staff is highly effective. They are expertly equipped to provide group and individualised support, including language support and reading intervention.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are generally very well behaved in lessons. Attitudes to learning are consistently positive and any form of disruption is very uncommon. Pupils say that lessons are enjoyable because they listen to each other and value different opinions.
- Good relationships with adults and pupils and a strong sense of right and wrong are underpinned by a strong moral code and mutual respect.
- Behaviour outside the classroom is usually good but parents and pupils refer to incidents of misbehaviour that have occurred in the playground at lunchtimes. This is improving now that the lunchtime arrangements have been altered.
- Pupils feel safe when at school and value the high-quality environment of the school, both indoors and outdoors. Bullying is very rare, and any concerns which do arise are dealt with swiftly.
- Pupils are aware of the risks of personal injury and the need to be careful when talking to adults outside the school. However, their awareness of how to stay safe when using the internet is underdeveloped. For example, some of the older children use internet based social networks to communicate when out of school, and the school curriculum does not include enough guidance on this.

The leadership and management are good

- The new leadership team, with the support of governors, consistently communicates high

expectations and ambition.

- Self-evaluation is accurate and well supported by the local authority. The school's actions are carefully planned, concerted and effective. Development priorities are well communicated as a consequence of regular and inclusive staff meetings, although documentation in support is not easily translated into action.
- Teachers with subject responsibilities demonstrate expert knowledge and monitor subject performance regularly by looking at samples of pupils' work. However, they do not yet have adequate time to work with colleagues or analyse data to evaluate progress across the school.
- The designated special educational needs coordinator is an excellent role-model in the classroom but is still developing the specialist knowledge necessary to fulfil this demanding leadership role. Good administrative and specialist assistance is provided for the coordinator by supporting staff.
- The performance management of teachers and support staff is good. The processes in place successfully link whole school development priorities to individual professional development. As a consequence the career progression of all staff is appropriately related to school performance. There is a need for a better induction for teachers new to the school.
- The school's curriculum provides well-organised and effective opportunities for learning for all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- The school provides a broad range of experiences that contribute well to the pupils' achievement and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Spiritual awareness is outstanding, with a wealth of opportunities for pupils to develop their own understanding of Catholicism and other world religions, including artistic and musical forms of celebration.
- The school works well with parents, including those for whom English is an additional language, to achieve positive benefits for pupils. Processes for recording parental views are strong, and there are good opportunities for parents to give feedback.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors work well with the school to monitor performance and to provide effective challenge. For example, governors know what is happening in school, are aware of the quality of teaching and know how different groups of pupils are progressing compared to similar schools nationally. Governors make good use of performance management to ensure that staff development time is focused upon school development priorities. Good succession planning ensures continuity of expertise amongst the governing body, maintaining the quality of leadership including that of sub-committees. For example governor training and development is purposeful and linked to development priorities. The school finances are well managed, and funds intended for a specific purpose are allocated appropriately. For example governors understand how, and for what purpose, the pupil premium is being spent. The school's safeguarding arrangements are rigorously checked by the governor who has responsibility for pupils' safety. As a result, safeguarding arrangements meet current national requirements.

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	120608
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	403443

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Sparrow
Headteacher	Geraldine Willders
Date of previous school inspection	20 November 2007
Telephone number	01476 562017
Fax number	01476 575596
Email address	info@st-marys-grantham.lincs.sch.uk

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