

St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary School

Rossall Grove, Little Sutton, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH66 1NN

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2013

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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement is good and improving. Standards of attainment of current pupils are above average and progress is quickening across the school.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. All adults have high expectations of pupils. Teachers know each pupil as an individual and ensure that planning is closely matched to the learning needs of all.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well. They take excellent care of each other and are very proud of their school.
- The varied curriculum engages the interests of pupils well.
- Parents are highly positive about the school's work and the education it provides.
- The headteacher provides robust leadership and has a very clear view of how the school can continue to improve. A strong sense of teamwork exists between all who learn and work in the school.
- Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching to ensure that it is helping pupils to learn and progress well.
- Governors are committed to supporting leaders to move the school forward. They visit the school regularly and have an accurate picture of the school's strengths.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is yet outstanding.
- Teachers do not always provide enough advice for pupils when they mark their work.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to use their targets to improve their work and do not have enough time in lessons to act on advice when it is given in teachers' marking.
- Governors hold leaders to account well but do not receive enough information about how well all pupils and groups of pupils are doing.
- Reviews to consider the progress made by all pupils are not yet formal enough to ensure the best use is made of all the achievement information available in the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 15 lessons or parts of lessons. The inspectors also looked at examples of pupils' work, listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of reading skills.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils and inspectors spoke to pupils about their work. Inspectors held meetings with two members of the governing body. They spoke to a representative of the local authority and met with members of the school staff.
- In the course of the inspection the views of 22 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the start of the school day and took account of the school's own questionnaires to parents and the views of staff expressed in the questionnaire completed during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including a summary of the school's evaluation of its own effectiveness, the school development plan and an analysis of current data of pupils' attainment and progress. Minutes from governing body meetings were also considered.

Inspection team

Lyn Pender, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Dave Blackburne

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small group of pupils is from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well above the national average. A well below-average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is in line with the national average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding provided for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority.)
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection a new deputy headteacher has been appointed and a number of experienced staff have retired. A new Chair of the Governing Body was elected in April 2013.
- A Community Learning Centre is housed in the school and is used regularly by the local community.
- A breakfast club, an after-school club and wrap-around care are provided on site by a private provider. This provision is subject to a separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding, in order to raise pupils' achievement even further, by making sure that:
 - all teachers provide regular and helpful guidance in marking so that pupils know how to improve their work and are given time in lessons to act on teachers' advice
 - all teachers provide opportunities in lessons for pupils to use their personal targets to check how well they are doing.
- Further strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - governors are given regular information about the achievement of all pupils and groups of pupils
 - meetings to review pupils' progress take place regularly and procedures are sharpened to ensure the information gathered is shared more effectively.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. Most children enter the school with skills below those expected for their age. Teaching responds extremely well to the interests of children and develops great self-confidence and encourages independence well. This good and sometimes excellent provision in all areas of learning prepares children well for Year 1.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been broadly in line with the national standard for a number of years. School data and inspection evidence indicates that pupils are now making faster progress than in previous years and standards, although still broadly average, have improved.
- Published data in 2012 showed that standards reached by pupils were broadly similar to the national standard by the end of Key Stage 2. However, the progress made by this cohort was slower than expected and was below the national average in English. Current school data and pupils' work show that the rate of progress across all year groups has accelerated. Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics has improved to above the national standard and the vast majority of pupils are making the progress expected of them. By the end of Year 6 the proportion making better than the progress expected of them from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics now compares favourably with the national average.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding all receive good support, so that they achieve well and do at least as well as other pupils in the school. This reflects the school's commitment to ensuring every child has an equal opportunity.
- Early reading skills are developed well through careful teaching of letters and the sounds they make. Pupils read regularly in school and at home and say how much they enjoy reading and appreciate the range of books provided for them. Tablet computers are used frequently and effectively to allow pupils to find out more about the topics being studied.
- Throughout the school pupils are eager to learn. They listen attentively in lessons, enjoy sharing their ideas with others and try hard to do their best. Most present their work neatly and all take a pride in their achievements.

The quality of teaching is good

- A warm, welcoming and well-organised environment establishes a positive climate for learning throughout the school.
- The headteacher's and other leaders' focus on continuing to improve the quality of teaching is bringing about improvements in pupils' achievement. Examples of outstanding teaching were seen during the inspection and the majority of lessons contained outstanding elements. However, lesson observations and work in pupils' books show that the quality of teaching over time is typically good.
- Teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities to work together in small groups and become actively involved in their learning. For example, in a Year 2 lesson pupils used balance scales to measure and compare the weights of the potatoes they had harvested from their vegetable patch the day before. They were excited, and very proud, to be using their own vegetables in this lesson but worked together sensibly and quickly on the task in hand.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge and well-developed questioning skills are used effectively to explore and correct pupils' misconceptions. Good teamwork between class teachers and skilful teaching assistants ensures that all pupils are supported well. Leaders and staff have high expectations of all pupils and know them well. Parents appreciate the high levels of individual care provided for their children.
- Lessons are well planned and teachers make learning fun. Activities are well matched to the needs and abilities of all pupils.

- Pupils' work is marked regularly and some marking is of a high quality and enables pupils to be very clear about their next steps in learning. However, this is not yet consistent practice across the school. In the most effective lessons teachers ensure that pupils have enough time to act upon the advice provided, but this does not yet happen regularly enough.
- Pupils are clear about their individual targets and think the way they are now shown on key fobs attached to their pencil cases is a very good idea. However, pupils do not yet get enough opportunities to use their targets to check how well they are doing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are happy, welcoming and very well-mannered. They are extremely proud of their school and are keen to tell visitors about their work and the opportunities they have, such as the many visits they make as part of the curriculum.
- Pupils are exceptionally well-behaved at all times. They encourage and support each other in lessons and all age groups display extremely positive attitudes towards learning.
- The different forms of bullying are well understood. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet. Pupils are aware of the effect that their actions can have on others and take full responsibility for their personal conduct. Consequently, incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and are confident to share any concerns with staff because they know they will be listened to.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. Pupils are known as individuals and learn how to manage their own behaviour from the time they join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils have the opportunity to make a strong contribution to the life of the school, for example as Year 6 play leaders who help the younger pupils at playtime or as members of the school council who help other pupils to keep safe by giving presentations about cyber-bullying.
- Attendance has a high profile and is above the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a clear vision for continuing to improve the school. He is well supported by the leadership team, staff and governors, who share his ambition for the school and show great determination in driving forward improvements. School leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and plan effectively for areas that need to be improved.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher, with the help of subject leaders, regularly check on the quality of teaching and the impact it is having on helping pupils to learn and make progress. Performance management arrangements are linked to pupils' progress and staff training needs.
- Tracking systems are in place to record the progress made by pupils from their starting points. These systems provide a wealth of information about the achievement of pupils and help leaders to identify anyone who is in danger of falling behind. However, leaders do not yet formally meet termly with teachers to review the progress of pupils or groups of pupils. These meetings are not yet on a more formal footing and so do not provide leaders with an even sharper overview of progress against which the school's performance can be measured.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is led well and managed effectively. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated in this inclusive school.
- The curriculum motivates and enthuses pupils and provides a range of opportunities for them to practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills through other subjects. Subjects are brought together into topics that engage pupils' interests well. The curriculum contributes very effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All pupils have access to the wide range of trips provided, and the well-attended after-school clubs support the development of pupils' achievement very well.

- The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, in particular, is very flexible and changes regularly to respond extremely well to the interests of the children.
- Parents and their children hold overwhelmingly positive views of the school. Those who spoke to inspectors commented on the warm, caring ethos and family atmosphere that exists and agreed that they would recommend the school to others.
- The local authority provides light-touch support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are highly supportive of the school and take their roles and responsibilities very seriously. They regularly access training to keep their skills up to date and support new governors effectively when they join the governing body. Members make regular visits to find out at firsthand about the work of the school. Outcomes of these visits are recorded and shared during governing body meetings and form part of the regular checks leaders make on the school's performance. Governors are provided with useful information about the progress of pupils by the headteacher and other leaders. However, they do not currently receive termly information about the progress of, and standards reached by, all groups of pupils in order to enable them to question leaders in depth about pupils' achievement or the quality of teaching. The governing body ensures that the performance of staff is linked to how well pupils learn. The school's finances are deployed effectively and governors are clear about the use of the pupil premium and the way it is used to provide additional support for pupils known to be eligible for this funding. Safeguarding procedures are checked regularly and meet statutory 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	111357
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	412369

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	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colette Winterburn
Headteacher	Robert Hughes
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2010
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