

St Mark's CE Primary School

Aviary Road, Walkden, Worsley, Manchester, M28 2WF

Inspection dates 25–26 September 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.

- The school provides a welcoming environment where its ethos is reflected in the care and respect that adults show all pupils. The successful promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of the school's work and relationships are strong at all levels.
- From overall expected starting points, pupils make good progress throughout the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium make good progress because they are supported effectively.
Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are polite and thoughtful. They feel safe and happy in school. High attendance reflects this.
- As a result of good teaching, and outstanding teaching in some year groups, standards in English and mathematics are above the national average by the end of Year 6.
- Senior leaders have a good understanding of how well pupils are achieving. This is used effectively to ensure that training and support for staff are strongly focused on raising pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.
- Governors support and challenge the school well. Together with senior leaders they oversee the school's continuing improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The majority of teaching is not yet outstanding.
- The proportion of pupils making more than expected progress is not consistently high.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 19 lessons including one joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors looked at pupils' workbooks and listened to a number of children read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, senior and middle leaders. An inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- A number of other documents were looked at, including the school's own evaluation of its own performance, the school's own data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, and records relating to how the money from the pupil premium is spent. Records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding were also analysed.
- Inspectors also took account of 20 Ofsted's staff questionnaires and 51 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Barbara Martin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Geoffrey Yates

Additional Inspector

Frances Farnorth

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-size primary school.
- Most pupils are White British and very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups.
- There are no disabled pupils in the school.
- A very small minority of pupils with special educational needs are supported through school action.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care, children from service families and those eligible to receive free school meals is well below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has achieved many awards including Healthy School status, Artsmark Gold, Eco Schools Silver, Lead Literacy School and Safer Schools Gold.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the overall quality of teaching from good to outstanding so that a greater proportion of pupils make more than expected progress by:
 - consistently providing pupils with work that always fully challenges them in every lesson
 - giving pupils more opportunities to work independently
 - sharing the outstanding practice that already exists in the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage their skills and abilities are similar to those typically expected for their age. They achieve well, especially in reading and writing, because of the good teaching they receive and the opportunities they have to be involved in fun activities where they can learn through first-hand experiences. From these individual starting points good progress continues throughout the school.
- Standards by the end of Year 2 are well above average in writing, reading and mathematics. There has been an upward trend in attainment since 2010. Standards by the end of Year 6 are also above the national average in English and mathematics. This represents good progress from their starting points for those pupils involved.
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics has improved during the past year with a higher proportion of pupils gaining Level 5 in the Year 6 national tests. This is due, in part, to teachers teaching mathematics to pupils with similar ability together in one class and a stronger focus on teaching calculation and problem-solving skills. Pupils learn well in English. One of the reasons for this is that teachers make learning fun.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. In the 2013 Year 1 phonics screening check, which measures how well pupils know letters and sounds, pupils' attainment was much higher than that found nationally. Pupils enjoy reading and are keen to develop their reading skills. By the time pupils leave Year 6, the majority are exceeding the progress expected of them.
- Not all pupils achieve the progress they are capable of by the end of Year 6. This is because sometimes their work is not always difficult enough or not enough time is allowed for them to work independently. In 2012, the proportion of pupils that made more than expected progress in reading and mathematics was lower than the national average.
- The school has a strong commitment to equality of opportunity. Those pupils who have special educational needs receive additional adult support in classes and within small groups to help them with their learning. This has helped them to perform better in English and mathematics than similar pupils nationally.
- The number of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals is tiny. This makes any comparison between their attainment and progress and that of other pupils in the school statistically meaningless.
- A very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View believe their children are making good progress at school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Overall, teaching is at least good and some is outstanding. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. Improvements have been due to the senior leaders tackling the weaknesses in teaching rigorously. This good and better teaching has resulted in pupils' good progress and attainment in English and mathematics improving over time.
- The good and imaginative teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a secure start to their learning. Children's social, language and mathematical skills are promoted well.
- In the most effective lessons, teachers are inspirational and their expectations are high. Teachers use questions skilfully in order to check on pupils' understanding of what is being taught and to encourage them to think for themselves.
- Time is also given for pupils to learn with a partner, in a group, or independently. This promotes opportunities for pupils to develop their social and personal skills. This strength in teaching, however, is not reflected in all lessons. Good use is also made by teachers of audio, visual, and other communication skills.

- Teaching assistants provide valuable support helping pupils make good progress by supporting the teaching and learning that is taking place in and out of the classroom. They are particularly effective in one-to-one and small group work.
- Thorough marking of pupils' work enables teachers to build effectively on pupils' knowledge and understanding. A particular strength is that pupils are given time to respond to their teachers' comments in their books and to correct their own mistakes. Pupils are also given the opportunity to evaluate their own work against learning targets. This helps them to understand how well they are learning.
- Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons and they are keen to learn especially when lessons are relevant to their own experiences.
- In lessons that are good rather than outstanding, activities are not always fully adapted to pupils' needs and some have to wait too long to work independently on their tasks. As a consequence, some pupils do not learn as much as they could. In these lessons, often all the pupils work on the same task at the same time, which means some pupils are not sufficiently challenged. When this happens, learning is less strong and some pupils mark time.
- A very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View believe that their children are well taught.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is outstanding. Records over time indicate a similar picture with no exclusions or incidents of bullying.
- The pupils are well mannered in the dining room and wait sensibly to collect their lunches, despite fairly long queues on some occasions. Their behaviour is also impeccable in assembly and during break times on the playground.
- The vast majority display exemplary attitudes to learning, even when occasionally, teaching is not challenging enough for some pupils.
- Pupils say that behaviour is always excellent and that there is no bullying of any kind. They say that they are extremely safe in school and that adults are there for them should they need help. Typical comments were; 'I love this school', and, 'I wouldn't change anything'
- Pupils' above average attendance and excellent punctuality strongly support the fact that pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Visitors often comment that they are made to feel welcome by the pupils. They are also complimented on their perfect behaviour during visits out of school.
- The majority of parents who responded to Parent View believe that their children are well behaved, feel safe and are well looked after at school.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is built into the various topics. As a consequence, pupils know the difference between right and wrong and have a good understanding of cultures and religions other than their own. The importance of respect for others is modelled by all staff. This is seen in the excellent way that pupils treat each other and all staff.

The leadership and management are good

- The quality of leadership and management is good throughout the school and largely evidenced by the improved achievement and progress that pupils have made over time.
- The headteacher and senior leaders are an effective team and contribute well to the school's improvement. They promote the school's ambition, which is summarised as 'the pursuit of excellence', in all aspects of planning, including the effective school development plan.
- Senior leaders have made many improvements since the last inspection, which have impacted

positively on improving pupils' achievement. For example, the quality of teaching has been rigorously checked by senior leaders. Weak performance has been challenged and assessments have been made more reliable at the end of Year 2. The school continues to check the quality of teaching as part of its performance management programme. A reason why the leadership of teaching is not yet outstanding is because the excellent practice of some teachers is not shared throughout the school.

- The newly appointed Early Years Foundation Stage leader's work is already impacting positively on children's progress. She is an effective, enthusiastic leader who has a clear sense of direction for developments within the Nursery and Reception units.
- Much work has gone into the recently established curriculum which is designed to encourage pupils to work across different subjects in one lesson in topics. These changes to the curriculum have given pupils the opportunity to use a range of skills in one lesson in an exciting way.
- The school provides a range of sporting activities and physical educational lessons. A professional coach, as well as teachers, teaches these. Pupils are involved in many sports teams and are well aware of how important exercise is to keep them healthy. The school has not yet received the Primary School Sports funding.
- Performance management is well managed through effective appraisal and pay awards are linked directly to teachers' performance and pupils' progress. Training courses for staff are directly linked to school improvement.
- The school's view of its own performance is accurate, although too modest with regard to pupils' behaviour and safety, which is outstanding rather than good as the school judged.
- The local authority has confidence in the school's leadership and only provides a light touch support. For example, for reviewing the school's performance and providing staff training.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body makes a good contribution to school improvement and effectively supports and challenges the headteacher in her management of the school.
 - Governors are well informed, through their understanding of comparative data, about pupils' performance. They also know what improvements are needed in order to raise the school's overall performance to outstanding. Several of the governors work with pupils on a regular basis and this gives them a good understanding of the school's work. They have a good understanding of performance management procedures and make sure that targets are challenging for teachers and senior leaders.
 - The budget is well managed. The governing body ensures that the pupil premium funding is used to support the pupils for whom it is intended and that it has a positive impact.
 - Statutory duties are met effectively, including ensuring that the school's safeguarding arrangements meet 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	105949
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	426227

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	358
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Macdonald
Headteacher	Jill Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2008
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