

Divine Saviour Roman Catholic Primary School

Broomfield Rise, Abbots Langley, WD5 0HW

Inspection dates 7–8 November 2013

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 achieve well in English and mathematics and in their all-round personal development.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils say they feel safe and enjoy their learning. Attendance is above average.
- Leaders make sure training given to staff meets the needs of the school well, leading to significant improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- A strong sense of community and a clear focus on values are central to the school's work. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- The school makes good use of partnerships with others to benefit pupils and staff.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in mathematics is not always as good as it is in English. Teachers do not always make sure that pupils' mathematical concepts are accurate or relate learning well enough to real-life.
- There are inconsistencies in the level of work given to more-able pupils.
- Not all teachers use questions skilfully or encourage pupils to be more independent in their learning.
- Subject leaders do not make sure that mathematics is well planned in other subjects or are fully informed about the quality of teaching in their subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed an assembly and 13 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. Ten members of staff were seen teaching.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, school leaders and staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils during lessons about their work, looked at their books and listened to them read.
- Inspectors took account of 38 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors analysed responses from 15 questionnaires completed by school staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at progress and attendance information, improvement plans, evidence of the monitoring of teaching, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Vivienne McTiffen, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Anthony Green

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British or mixed White backgrounds.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, the largest of these being of African heritage. A below-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language and nearly all are fluent in English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium) is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of year 6.
- There is a daily breakfast club during term time, which is managed by the governing body.
- The school has been through a period of staff changes but staffing has been more stable for the past year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in mathematics by:
 - planning more opportunities for pupils to use mathematics in a range of subjects
 - making sure all pupils make the best possible progress in developing accurate mathematical concepts and are motivated to learn through interesting and meaningful tasks
 - making sure more-able pupils receive work that is well matched to their abilities right from the start of lessons.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - developing the roles of subject leaders more fully so they have a clear view of the quality of teaching in their subjects
 - building upon existing good practice to develop teachers' skills in asking well-targeted questions that extend learning and in encouraging pupils to become independent.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Since the previous inspection, pupils' achievement has risen. Improvements in teaching are leading to accelerated progress and rising standards throughout the school.
- Raised achievement is not reflected in the 2013 Year 6 test results because these pupils had insufficient time to catch up after a period of underachievement during their time in Key Stage 2. Given these circumstances, they did well to reach above-average standards in writing and average standards in reading and mathematics.
- The school's information shows that, during 2013, pupils in other year groups made good progress. Work in books and the school's information show that pupils in the current Year 6 are making good progress in line with others in the school. Through Key Stage 2, standards are above average.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception class make good progress from expected starting points. They independently choose activities and share resources. They do well in acquiring early reading, writing and mathematical skills so they are well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average.
- By the time they reach Year 6, pupils write with maturity and complexity. They often write at length in subjects other than English. For example, pupils in Year 5 wrote about a Viking raid on the island of Lindisfarne. They used various word-processing fonts to present their well-written accounts dynamically.
- Pupils read widely and say they enjoy the books on offer. They use dictionaries and thesaurus to widen their understanding and vocabulary. They use books for research in science and history topics. They talk about characters and plots and say that stories often inspire their writing.
- Pupils add, subtract, divide and multiply competently, but they do not have sufficient opportunity to use mathematics in other subjects or understand its use in real life. Pupils learn best when tasks are interesting and meaningful. For example, during the inspection, children in the Reception class looked for patterns around the school, before creating their own, using computers, paints and shapes. They enjoyed the task and made good progress.
- More-able pupils make good progress in reading and writing and excel in speaking, listening and thinking skills. In mathematics, they do not reach their full potential because the work is sometimes too easy. One pupil commented, 'We whiz through easy work.' Too often, pupils do not receive the right level of work from the start of lessons.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. The good level of support they receive helps them to learn effectively. They are given work that is well suited to their ability and make small steps towards their individual targets.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups and the few who speak English as an additional language make progress in line with their classmates. Those who join the school with little or no English quickly develop their language skills as the school makes good use of outside help to support pupils.

- In 2013, the attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium was lower than that of their classmates in reading and mathematics. By the end of year 6, they were about a year behind in these subjects. In writing, they did as well as other pupils. The school's most recent information shows that gaps are closing across the school but the achievement of these pupils in mathematics remains a priority.
- Pupils achieve well in religious education, history and science. They have a well-developed interest in others and the world around them. They participate keenly in sports and do well in inter-school competitions. As a result of the school's use of the primary school sport funding, a large proportion of pupils are improving their physical well-being in new lunchtime sports clubs. Many pupils play instruments and are in the school choir and orchestra.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers make sure pupils know the purpose of their learning and how long they have to complete their work. They introduce lessons well and make sure there is time for pupils to use their skills. Resources are used well and all adults are actively involved right from the start of lessons.
- Teachers develop pupils' speaking, listening and thinking skills well. As a result, pupils express opinions and explain their reasoning. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 6 engaged in lively discussion about different points of view before starting to write. Good teaching presented pupils with interesting subjects to discuss and encouraged them to question each others' opinions.
- Teachers encourage a good response from pupils. They make sure tasks suit the range of ability in the class and often link subjects together in interesting topics, inspiring pupils' reading and writing. Pupils' work is attractively displayed and achievements celebrated.
- Lessons build on previous learning and deepen pupils' knowledge. Teachers use pupils' contributions well to move learning forward. In the best teaching, they skilfully question pupils and follow up answers with clear explanations to extend learning further. This good practice is not sufficiently well developed in all classes.
- Teachers correct any misunderstandings as lessons proceed although they do not always check that concepts in mathematics are accurate and fully understood. Teachers indicate how pupils can improve their work when they mark pupils' books but this is stronger in English and mathematics than it is in other subjects.
- In the Nursery and Reception class, staff often plan their teaching around children's interests. There is a good balance between tasks children choose for themselves and those that are led by adults, both indoors and outside. Staff listen closely to children and help them to develop speech and language well.
- Teaching assistants play an important role during lessons. They work with small groups or individuals and know pupils well. They help all, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, to gain confidence in their abilities and become successful learners.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils say they enjoy school and they feel safe, a view strongly supported by parents. One pupil commented, 'The school really cares for everyone.' Pupils have a good understanding of

different forms of bullying. Incidents are rare but fully recorded and followed up by the school. Discussions in assemblies and lessons help pupils to deal with any issues that may arise.

- Behaviour is good and consistently well managed. Pupils understand the school's rules and show tolerance to others. They recognise that some pupils may find it difficult to behave well. The school's logs show that unacceptable behaviour is dealt with and individuals make improvements over time.
- Pupils' good behaviour contributes well to the school's smooth daily running. They respond well to after-school clubs and the well-run breakfast club which provides a calm and orderly start to the school day and encourages punctuality.
- Pupils speak keenly about their roles as school councillors, and as members of the Eco committee and Chaplaincy team. They show an interest in those from backgrounds different to their own and say they like helping others in the school and further afield.
- Pupils celebrate each others' achievements. They are proud to set a good example and are keen to be 'Star of the Week' or gain one of the school's awards. They talk enthusiastically about their sporting successes and involvement in performances.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and pay attention in lessons. Behaviour is not outstanding because teachers do not always make the most of pupils' positive attitudes and fully encourage them to use their initiative to become more independent in their learning. This results in them sometimes being more passive than they should be.
- Attendance is above average and has improved since the previous inspection. The school's concerted efforts in helping parents to understand the effect of poor attendance on their children's achievement have reduced lengthy absences. Very few pupils are late or stay away from school for long periods.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's determined leadership has overcome the challenges presented during a time of staff changes and rapidly improved the quality of teaching and raised achievement. He and the leadership team successfully communicate the school's aims and unite staff in a common sense of purpose, reflected by a very positive response from questionnaires completed by school staff.
- The training given to staff to develop their skills is a key factor in improving the quality of teaching. Good use is made of outside expertise and partnerships with others. The local authority has played a major role in making sure staff have an accurate view of pupils' progress and in developing teaching and leadership skills.
- Senior leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and make sure staff know how to improve their work. Those new to subject leadership roles are well prepared because they receive relevant training and work closely with more experienced members of staff. They are keen to implement new plans but are not always clear about the quality of teaching.
- Leaders keep a close eye on how well pupils are doing. In the Nursery and Reception classes, well-organised 'Learning Journeys' show children's progress over time. The school has effective systems to check pupils' progress, and uses the information well to identify those pupils who need extra help. Pupil-premium funding is spent on extra staffing and resources, taking care to

meet the needs of individuals. The school is committed to equality of opportunity. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.

- Leaders make sure that the school offers a wide range of subjects. Trips, visitors and clubs add to pupils' enjoyment and enhance their positive attitudes to learning. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through a range of interesting experiences and links with others, including local schools and the diocese.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The roles of governors have strengthened since the previous inspection. As a result, they know how well the school is doing and ask questions about its performance. Governors recognise how teaching has improved and evaluate the effect of spending on staff professional development and training. They know how the school tackles any underperformance. They are clear that good teaching leads to good achievement and should be rewarded. Governors make good use of local authority support to help them to make decisions about teachers' pay and to develop their skills. They use expertise in their ranks to draft plans and set targets. Governors frequently collect the views of parents and analyse their findings. The governing body carries out its responsibilities effectively and ensures robust safeguarding procedures.

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	117485
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	425263

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	Paul Hughes
Headteacher	Philip Gibbs
Date of previous school inspection	17 November 2011
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