

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School

Durants Road, Ponders End, Enfield, EN3 7DE

Inspection dates

20–21 March 2014

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

- The headteacher has been instrumental in promoting a highly positive ethos within the school. Staff morale is high.
- Pupils' achievement is good because pupils make good progress from low starting points and reach high standards in English and mathematics by the time they leave the school.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers receive good support from senior leaders and managers to bring about improvements.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress because teachers make regular and accurate checks on how well they are doing.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is strength of the school.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Their attitudes to learning are very positive. Pupils feel very safe in school. Attendance is above the national average.
- The school actively engages parents and carers and other family members in the life of the school. They are highly supportive of the school.
- Leaders, managers and governors have been effective in maintaining the quality of good teaching and the standards pupils achieve. They are well placed to bring about further improvements.
- Governors bring a wide range of expertise to their role and provide good support and challenge to senior leaders about how well the school is performing.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some lessons teachers do not check pupils' understanding often enough so that they can adapt their teaching to provide more challenge to pupils and increase the pace of learning.
- Teachers do not always take account of what pupils know already when they plan work, in particular in mathematics. This means sometimes pupils repeat work they can do already.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons or parts of lessons, of which five were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation including the school's own performance data, records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching and an analysis of the school's strengths and areas for development, the school's improvement plan, minutes of the governing body meetings and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils. Inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed their reading with them.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised to evaluate progress, the quality of marking and feedback provided by teachers.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders, teachers, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The views of parents and carers were sought at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors took account of 20 responses on Parent View, the Ofsted online survey.
- The inspectors considered 23 questionnaires completed by members of staff.

Inspection team

Mirella Lombardo, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Patricia MacLachlan	Additional Inspector
Peter McCarthy	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium (extra money provided by the government for pupils including those eligible for free school meals, in public care or from service families) is above average.
- Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and most of them speak English as an additional language.
- The school makes use of the Suffolks Speech and Language Resource Base in Enfield for a very small number of its pupils.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher acts as a mentor to another headteacher within the local authority who is new to headship.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding by making sure that teachers:
 - check on pupils' learning throughout the lesson and adapt the level of challenge where needed
 - make sure that work planned takes into account the targets pupils have achieved, in particular in mathematics, so that pupils do not repeat work they have already demonstrated they can do.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are below what is expected for their age. Children are supported well by adults so that by the time they leave Reception they have made good progress from their starting points and leave with skills that are above those typically expected for their age.
- Teachers in the Reception classes work with other teachers within a cluster of Roman Catholic schools to make sure their assessments of children's work are accurate. They use this information well to provide children with activities to improve their skills in areas which are not as well developed.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is above that of other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics, and well above other pupils in writing. More pupils than seen nationally attain the higher levels in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils in Year 1 performed above the average in the 2013 national phonics screening check. Reading skills are developed well because pupils are taught phonics daily and sometimes in small groups. Pupils in every class are expected to read every day as part of their homework.
- In 2013, pupils attained above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. The most able pupils attained better than other pupils nationally in mathematics and reading. In writing, these pupils attained just below their national peers.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including the small number of pupils who are educated off site for part of the week, make good progress because the additional help they get in lessons is of a good quality and enables them to catch up.
- Pupils make good progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. Test results for Year 6 in 2013 show that their rate of progress in mathematics was similar to other pupils nationally and above that of other pupils nationally in reading and writing.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language attain better than their peers nationally in reading and writing because of the strategies they are given to improve their skills in these areas.
- Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills develop well because pupils enjoy reading regularly to their teachers and to the many volunteers who come into school. There are interesting books to read in every classroom and in the school library. Teachers regularly plan activities in mathematics that encourage pupils to use their skills of problem solving.
- The most able pupils make good progress because they are provided with good opportunities to develop more complex thinking strategies and regularly take part in competitions outside school.
- In 2013, the gap in attainment between Year 6 pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding and their peers in the school was similar to 2012 in writing. However, the gap in reading and mathematics has widened from one term behind to two terms behind in reading and two terms to three terms behind in mathematics. School records and lesson observations indicate that the progress of current eligible pupils is improving at a similar rate to other pupils year on year, and their attainment gap is reducing.
- The school's work to promote equality of opportunity is good because teachers are committed to giving all children strategies to help them improve their learning, including the use of individual targets.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good overall because there is a strong focus on developing pupils' thinking skills. Teachers encourage pupils to use these skills to develop 'thinking maps' to improve the questions they ask in their learning.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers develop children's skills in mathematics and

literacy well. For example, in the Nursery, children counted out pine cones on the weighing scales and adults encouraged them to use language such as 'heavier than' and 'lighter than'.

- Teachers demonstrate positive attitudes towards pupils and relationships in the school are strong. As a result, pupils are confident and enjoy learning, for example Year 6 pupils spoke about how they enjoy doing homework and how they are excited about their move to secondary school.
- Pupils confidently talk about their work and what they need to do to improve. This is because teachers meet regularly with individual pupils to discuss their work and agree targets.
- Teachers give pupils strategies to help them remember facts. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, the teacher had prepared a song set to a familiar tune to help pupils remember the different types of angles which can be found in shapes. Pupils used this information well to solve problems.
- Pupils develop their skills in reading and writing well because they are given opportunities to check their work and make improvements. For example, in a Year 2 class, pupils worked together in pairs to improve the beginnings of their stories and the teacher provided good guidance to improve their choice of adjectives.
- In some lessons, pupils are challenged to use questions to deepen their understanding in mathematics. For example, in a Year 6 class, pupils worked in groups to develop questions for each other on a range of graphs. These questions were of a very high quality and required pupils to interpret a range of evidence in order to respond.
- Teaching assistants provide good support to pupils, particularly to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. For example, an adult working with a small group of pupils in Year 2 asked pupils questions and expected them to respond in full sentences and reminded them of good listening and speaking skills.
- Improved marking is leading to good dialogue between pupils and their teachers, in particular in writing. However, during lessons, not all teachers adapt activities in the light of pupils' responses to the questions they ask, and this slows the pace of learning for some pupils.
- In some mathematics books pupils are given work they have previously completed successfully and, when teachers plan work, not enough reference is made to targets pupils have already achieved.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite to each other and the adults around them. They settle quickly to work, behave well in lessons and around the school and this results in the good standards they achieve.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and pupils like achieving well. They speak confidently about their work, know the levels they are working at and what to do next in order to improve further.
- Pupils take pride in their school uniform and the presentation of their work. Classrooms are bright and inviting. Pupils say that the behaviour seen during the inspection is typical and there is no bullying. However, the school has not yet fully developed systems for checking the type of behaviour incidents which occur and if there are any patterns in the behaviour of any pupil or groups of pupils.
- The school prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education, for example every pupil in Year 6 has a responsibility to help in the dining hall during lunchtime. Pupils also take on responsibilities as school councillors and as 'sports buddies'.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe. They say they trust their teachers and other adults and feel listened to. They have a good understanding of personal safety, including when they are using the internet, for example one child said, 'Even though we are taught about e-safety, at the end of the day, you also have to use your intuition.'
- Parents and carers are highly positive about the school and how it keeps their children safe.

There are many opportunities to visit the school and find out about how their children are taught. Grandparents, too, are invited to help work with pupils and this adds to the positive and caring ethos within the school.

- Attendance is above the national average as a result of the school's continual work to promote punctuality and regular attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher and the governing body, provides clear leadership so that improvements since the last inspection have continued and teaching is now consistently good, with some that is outstanding, and attainment continues to be high.
- Her aspirations for the school are shared fully by all staff who are very positive about working in the school and the support they receive from senior leaders. The vast majority of parents who completed the online questionnaire and those spoken to during the inspection are very supportive of the school's work.
- Subject leaders continue to develop their role and have now begun to check the learning in lessons as well as in pupils' books so that they can provide support to other teachers in the school based on what they find out.
- Leaders track the progress pupils make regularly and set targets for teachers relating to their expectations for the progress all pupils need to make. Systems for tracking behaviour are less developed and so it is not always possible to check the trend in pupils' behaviour over a period of time.
- The pupil premium funding is allocated effectively. For example, funding is used to provide one-to-one tuition sessions for pupils as well as additional support in class.
- The school makes good use of the additional government sports funding to buy in specialist coaches to work with pupils and teachers. The school has also used the funding to increase pupils' participation in sport through cycling proficiency classes. There are weekly rewards for pupils who walk to school, use a scooter or cycle.
- The school strongly promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about different religions, often from visitors from those communities. They regularly take part in musical events such as singing at the local hospice and other Christian churches, as well as at the Royal Festival Hall. Social responsibility is strongly promoted, for example pupils who attended the school in the past are welcomed back to work with pupils in Year 6. Pupils spoke about visits to the theatre and how they enjoy putting on drama productions. They visit art galleries regularly and, as a result, the quality of pupils' artwork is very high.
- The curriculum is exciting. Pupils are taught to speak and write French and the school is currently involved in a programme to develop the use of language in science. There are many clubs, for example cheerleading and tag rugby and a gardening club for younger children.
- The school works with other schools locally to make sure assessments are accurate. It has strong links with schools abroad, which help pupils learn about other cultures.
- The local authority provides light touch support to the school. This includes annual checks on the quality of teaching, which has provided leaders with an evaluation of the school's work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well informed and focused on improving the school. They have a clear understanding of the school's priorities and how to bring about further improvements and provide a good level of challenge to school leaders. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and of performance data and regularly visit the school and talk to staff and pupils. They keep updated through regular training and bring a range of expertise to their role, such as in the areas of finance, human resources and health and safety. They understand the systems used to improve staff performance, including those used to reward good practice and manage underperformance. The use of the pupil premium and additional sports funding is managed well to give all pupils an equal chance to succeed with no discrimination. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and regular checks are made

so that the school is a safe place to be.

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	102036
Local authority	Enfield
Inspection number	431285

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	445
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marie Negus
Headteacher	Maeve Creed
Date of previous school inspection	26–27 February 2009
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