

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Amphill Road, Ryde, Isle of Wight, PO33 1LJ

Inspection dates 6–7 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school is improving. This is because senior leaders, by uniting the staff in support of their aims and vision, have made sure that the quality of teaching is consistently good. They have also ensured that teachers' checks on the standard of pupils' work is now accurate.
- Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics has risen steadily over the last few years, and is now above average.
- Pupils make good progress in a range of subjects throughout the school.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good. This enables them to explain tasks and topics clearly and accurately to pupils. Teachers establish good working relationships with them.
- Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They respond quickly to teachers' instructions and show respect to them and towards each other.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is outstanding. Pupils say they feel completely safe in school and their parents agree.
- Leaders have adapted the curriculum successfully. It includes a variety of topics and events which stimulate pupils' interest and promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Governors know how well pupils, including disadvantaged and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, are achieving and what leaders are doing to improve teaching.
- Children in the Reception class make a good start to their formal education and achieve well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement is not outstanding because pupils do not make rapid and sustained progress from their starting points.
- Teachers do not always set work at the right level.
- Teachers do not always give pupils sufficiently precise comments on their work or opportunities to act on their advice.
- Not all school's leaders are contributing to improving teaching and pupils' achievement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 10 lessons or part-lessons, taught by 10 teachers, two of which were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors observed all the classes in the school at least once. They also made shorter visits to a number of other lessons and activities. Inspectors attended an assembly, examined samples of pupils' written work together with a senior leader, and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors held discussions with groups of pupils, the Chair and two other members of the Governing Body, as well as with staff. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. Inspectors also held informal discussions with a number of parents.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's information on pupils' attainment and progress, and records of attendance. They examined safeguarding procedures and records of the school's own lesson observations, as well as the school's self-evaluation, performance management and planning documents.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, inspectors took account of 50 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View. They also considered five messages from parents, and 23 questionnaires completed by members of the teaching and support staff.

Inspection team

Robin Gaff, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Veronica Young

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the averaged-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage full time in the Reception class.
- About one in eight pupils is eligible for the pupil premium. This is additional government funding provided for disadvantaged children who are looked after or known to be eligible for free school meals. This proportion is below the national average.
- There is a below average proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- An above average proportion of pupils join or leave the school at other than the usual times.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school is part of a federation together with St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School in Carisbrooke. The two schools share a single governing body and are led by an executive headteacher.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club each school day for its own pupils.
- There is an independent pre-school on the school site. This is subject to separate inspection arrangements.
- Since the school's last inspection, there have been several changes in staffing. These include the executive headteacher, who was appointed to her post in September 2013. A number of other members of staff have been appointed in recent years to positions of responsibility within the school and across the federation.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enable pupils to make rapid and sustained progress throughout the school by ensuring that teachers always:
 - give pupils work that is set at the right level
 - provide pupils with detailed written advice about how to improve their work, and regular opportunities for them to respond to their comments.
- Make sure that leaders who have specific responsibility for areas of the school's work play a full part in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher and her senior colleagues have an accurate view of the school's performance and are determined to do what it takes to improve the school further. Staff fully support the senior team's ambition to make the school outstanding and are keen to develop their own practice.
- Senior leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently good. This has been achieved through regular observing teaching and keeping a close eye on pupils' work. Leaders have not shied away from tackling underperformance and teachers receive additional training and support if they need it. Any pay increases are explicitly linked to teachers' progress in reaching their targets, which are in turn closely related to raising pupils' achievement.
- Leaders have also ensured that the school's systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, especially at Key Stage 1, are now robust. This means that staff can quickly identify pupils who are at risk of falling behind and swiftly give them the support they need to enable them to catch up.
- Staff who are responsible for particular areas of the school's work, (sometimes known as middle leaders) some of whom are relatively new to their posts, are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their roles. They are not all as yet, however, contributing fully to the improvement of teaching and learning by, for example, observing lessons or examining pupils' work in detail. This is why leadership and management are not outstanding.
- Leaders have made good use of additional government funding to improve pupils' achievement and enhance their well-being. They have used the extra money for disadvantaged pupils to good effect by giving them increased support in and outside of the classroom. They have also ensured that no one is prevented from taking part in school trips for financial reasons.
- Sport premium funding has been used effectively, including to provide training for teachers to improve their levels of skill and confidence in teaching physical education. Pupils' participation in physical activity has increased, as has their awareness of its contribution to healthy lifestyles.
- The school has embraced the new primary curriculum. Leaders have used it as a springboard to increase, in particular, pupils' opportunities to write about topics that interest them. It has also enabled the school to promote even more effectively pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils benefit from a good variety of activities, events and after-school clubs. They especially enjoyed being 'young archaeologists' as a visiting speaker helped them to prepare to take part in the excavation of a Roman site. Pupils learn about different faiths and traditions, which helps them to prepare for life in modern Britain. Pupils enjoy attending the breakfast and after-school club, where the school provides them with a safe and stimulating environment for learning and play.
- The local authority has supported the school well, for example by helping leaders to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics.
- The federation has had a positive impact on the school. It has, for instance, enabled teachers to share their expertise in different subject areas with one another.
- Most of the parents who responded to the Parent View survey or communicated their views directly to inspectors, were supportive of the school and its leaders. A very large majority believe that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors visit the school frequently and share their findings with one another and with senior leaders. They have a good knowledge of how well pupils are performing academically compared with those in other schools. They ensure equal opportunities wherever possible. They are prepared to hold leaders to account for closing any gaps in pupils' learning. Governors know what leaders are doing to ensure that teaching is consistently good by setting staff challenging, but realistic, targets. They also understand and support what is being done to reward good teaching and to tackle the causes of weaker practice. They also understand the links between teachers' pay and pupils' achievement. Governors make sure that the school's budget is well managed and well used, and understand the impact its use is having on pupils' achievement and their personal development. They ensure that the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and comply with national regulations.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are eager to learn and come to school ready to do so. They say that behaviour in class is typically good and that teachers deal quickly and effectively with any instances of poor behaviour.
- Pupils behave sensibly and responsibly around the school, in the playground and during assemblies. They are considerate of one another, and are polite and helpful to adults, including visitors. Pupils from different backgrounds relate well to one another and there is no evidence of any discrimination.
- Pupils' good presentation of their work shows the pride they take in it. Pupils also take good care of the school environment, and there is no litter to be seen.
- Pupils understand about different types of bullying. They say that they have few concerns about it because it is rare. They say that staff quickly 'nip it in the bud' if it does occur and help them to overcome any disputes and disagreements.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because, occasionally, pupils' effort and attention lapse when classroom activities are not planned well enough to maintain their interest.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- None of the pupils, or parents or members of staff whom inspectors spoke to or who responded to the Parent View and staff surveys, raised any concerns about pupils' safety.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet or playground equipment.
- Pupils' attendance has improved significantly in recent years and is now above the national average.
- Child protection procedures, including those that are specific to early years, fully meet government requirements.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers, including in the Reception class, make their expectations clear to pupils and establish good routines with regard to both work and behaviour.
- Teachers have a good grasp of the different subjects they teach, including reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, they are able to give their pupils accurate information and demonstrate successfully the skills which they intend pupils to learn. These include phonics (the links between letters and sounds) in reading, solving mathematical problems and using punctuation correctly in writing.
- Teachers make good use of questioning to check that pupils have understood tasks, and use pupils' answers skilfully to extend their knowledge. When they see that pupils are struggling to complete a task or have finished sooner than planned, they adapt activities accordingly.
- Most tasks are well adapted to pupils' needs and succeed in engaging and maintaining their interest and enthusiasm. Teachers use different strategies in order to do this, some of which are innovative and lead, on occasion, to pupils making outstanding progress.
- Teachers make sure that, usually, tasks are neither too easy nor too difficult. When asked about this, pupils said that, mostly, the level of difficulty of their work was 'just right'. Occasionally, however, activities are not set at the right level, which slows the progress that some pupils can make. This is why teaching is not outstanding.
- Teachers mark pupils' work at sufficiently regular intervals. They often give pupils detailed, helpful advice about how they can make their work even better, but this is not always the case. Sometimes, teachers' comments are too brief or too imprecise to enable pupils to know what they need to do to improve. Teachers do not always make sure that pupils have benefited from their comments by, for example, correcting their own work after it has been marked.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils from different backgrounds, those who join the school at other than the normal time and those who are learning English as an additional language achieve well. Pupils' levels of attainment ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2, as shown by their performance in national tests at the end of Year 6, has risen significantly in recent years. Standards are now above the national average and have risen at a faster rate than found nationally. Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 has also risen and is above average. It is well above average in writing.
- By the time they leave the school, pupils make good progress from their starting points in both English and mathematics. This is not supported by progress information reported in national performance tables. However, this is because the school's checks on pupils' attainment in Key Stage 1, on which these figures are based, were inaccurate. This situation has now been rectified.
- Current pupils' work, including in both Years 2 and 6, as well as the school's own reliable records of checks on pupils' attainment and progress, confirms that they are achieving well. Leaders have recognised that pupils, especially boys, were making less progress than they could have done and have introduced measures which have resulted in considerable improvement. Boys and girls now write accurately and perceptively, in a range of styles and for different purposes, including reports, letters and poems.
- Pupils say they enjoy reading and are keen to talk about the books they have read. They read fluently and accurately, showing that they have a secure grasp of phonics, and with a good sense of meaning.
- Pupils gain a good understanding of how to solve mathematical problems and learn the basic skills, such as using multiplication tables, which enable them to do so.
- When progress is slower, this is usually because teachers have not adapted activities sufficiently well to pupils' different interests and abilities.
- The most able pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and in a range of other subjects, including history and French. This is because teachers have high expectations of them and give them tasks which suit their abilities. For example, in an English session, the teacher realised that the most able pupils had finished the task they had been given more quickly than expected. He then provided them with an extra challenge by giving them additional work, which enabled them to extend their knowledge and skills.
- The learning and progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are similar to that of other pupils in the school. They achieve well because teachers and teaching assistants work in partnership. This ensures that these pupils are able to cope well with tasks which are specially adapted to suit their needs. This demonstrates the school's effective promotion of equality of opportunity.
- The school makes good use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, for example by providing them with one-to-one teaching in areas where they need particular help. This enables these pupils to make good progress and to close any gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils.
- In 2014, the results of disadvantaged pupils in national tests in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 indicated that these pupils were more than a year behind other pupils in the school. The results also showed that the pupils were just over two terms behind all pupils nationally. However, these results were not typical of the standards usually reached by this group of pupils. In previous years, their attainment had been ahead of or similar to that of other pupils. This is also the case for disadvantaged pupils currently at the school.

The early years provision is good

- Children join the Reception class with differing levels of skills and knowledge. They make good progress in all areas of their learning and development, and as a result, they are well prepared to start Key Stage 1. This is because they benefit from consistently good teaching.
- Parents who spoke or wrote to the inspectors were extremely complimentary about the speed with which their children had settled in at school. Parents were particularly impressed with how quickly their children became independent and their progress in learning to read. As one parent said of her child, 'In a few short weeks, he has gone from having a basic knowledge of the alphabet to being able to read us short stories'.
- Adults give children good opportunities for learning, both in the classroom and in the outdoor area, where they learn to play safely and respect each other's space. Indoors, children develop their basic writing skills as, for example, they label their own paintings and drawings. Staff observe children carefully at

work and at play. They adapt activities well to suit children's needs and interests. Safety routines are well established and effective.

- Children behave well. For instance, at the end of the school day they listened intently to one another as they spoke to the class about what they had done, and responded quickly to the teacher's instructions. This showed that they are learning good habits and that adults are promoting their moral and social development well.
- Leaders have a very good understanding of what makes for good early years provision, and of what they need to do to make it even better. They recognise, for example, that not all children in the past have achieved their potential, because barriers to learning for individuals have not been picked up early enough.

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	118195
Local authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	449120

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	Katrina Rigby
Executive headteacher	Janet Tuck
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 June 2011
Telephone number	01983 562000
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