

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Manor House Road, Wednesbury, WS10 9PN

**Inspection dates** 7–8 May 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 headteacher, senior leadership team and governors have improved teaching and achievement since the school was last inspected.
- The school's leaders have created an environment where pupils are eager to learn and good behaviour and manners are typical.
- All groups of pupils in all year groups achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. The school is well placed to improve further.
- Children in the early years get a good start to their education. Good teaching ensures that they make good progress in Nursery and Reception.
- Teachers show high expectations for the quality of pupils' work, and their attitudes to learning and behaviour.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is good throughout the school, so pupils develop secure skills on which to build their future learning.
- Teachers know their pupils well and mostly give them work that is challenging enough to help them make good progress.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and at other times throughout the school day. They are polite to each other and to adults. This helps to make the school a safe place in which pupils feel comfortable.
- Pupils are proud of what they do. They keep their work books neat and tidy.
- Senior leaders check teaching regularly. They identify areas that need improving and provide prompt support. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' progress have improved.
- Governors know the school well. They play a significant role in making important decisions and planning improvements. They ask searching questions of the headteacher and other leaders, holding them accountable for the school's development.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment fell in 2014 and pupils' achievement was not as good as it should have been.
- Teachers do not always make sure that pupils act on the guidance given through marking.
- Teachers do not always move pupils on to the next steps in learning as soon as they are ready.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to investigate, explore and find things out for themselves, particularly in science.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 16 lessons. Seven of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors completed 'learning walk' observations to get an overview of one-to-one and small-group support for focus groups of pupils and the quality of the curriculum.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at the work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's own judgements on its strengths and weaknesses, and the data it collects on pupils' progress. Documents detailing the school's arrangements for safeguarding were reviewed and discussed.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders, subject leaders, teaching assistants and pupils. A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Questionnaire responses from 27 members of staff were analysed.
- Inspectors took account of the 37 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also took into consideration the results of a larger sample of parental views gathered through the school's own recent questionnaire.

## Inspection team

David Speakman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rebecca Nash

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- Children attend Nursery part time and Reception full time.
- The majority of pupils are White British. Others come from a wide range of different minority ethnic backgrounds. An average proportion, about a quarter, speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority) is average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There is a breakfast club before school each morning. It is managed by the governors and was included in the inspection.
- Since the last inspection, three teachers have joined the school.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress by ensuring that teachers:
  - encourage pupils to act on the advice given to them in marking so they learn from their mistakes
  - move pupils on in their learning as soon as they are ready
  - give pupils more opportunities to explore, investigate and find things out for themselves, especially in science.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Strong and effective leadership by the headteacher, senior leaders and governors has made sure that the school has improved steadily since it was last inspected. Teaching is better, which has led to improved learning and good achievement for all pupils. This has resulted in a school where high expectations are typical, pupils enjoy attending and they become good learners.
- Senior leaders have addressed long-term issues which led to a dip in test results and assessments in 2014. Since this group of pupils were in Year 1, their learning and progress have been affected by disruption to teaching. Leaders did well to ensure that the progress of these pupils in reading and writing was similar to that of all pupils nationally, but they made slower progress in mathematics. A number of pupils who achieved the nationally expected level at the end of Year 2, through additional coaching, narrowly missed achieving this level at Year 6 so achievement in mathematics was not good enough. Current progress, including in mathematics, is much better throughout the school.
- Regular checks on the quality of teaching, followed up by feedback and supportive action, have been effective. Senior and subject leaders observe lessons, check the work in pupils' books and seek pupils' views on their learning experiences. Together with ongoing assessments of pupils' progress, they use this detailed evidence well to provide support to teachers, where needed, to help them improve their skills. Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have recorded more teaching that is of the highest quality.
- Subject leadership is good, particularly in English and mathematics. Good guidance for staff and well-chosen training have resulted in reading, writing and mathematics being taught well throughout the school and standards are rising. The English leader has introduced well-structured regular reading lessons throughout Key Stage 2 to build on the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) to younger pupils. She has developed writing through linking it with other subjects. The mathematics leader has strengthened teaching by introducing focused support for groups of pupils in danger of falling behind. Leaders have recognised the need to strengthen investigative work in science to build more secure scientific exploration skills. Pupils commented that they would like more practical work in science.
- The school celebrates diversity and there is no discrimination of any kind. Staff ensure that all pupils are included in all activities and all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed. The school encourages pupils to develop positive attitudes to others, whatever their background or ability. Together with good academic progress, this prepares all pupils well for the next stages in their education.
- Extra funds are spent carefully so they are effective in the areas they are intended to support. Good use of the pupil premium has helped close gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally. Qualifying pupils receive small-group or one-to-one support to help them catch up. Leaders are working to improve the attendance of these pupils so they are in school learning more regularly. They are fully included in all school events and visits, and this helps to encourage positive attitudes.
- Leaders spend the primary school sports funding exceptionally well. A 'health mentor' works alongside class teachers to improve the teaching of physical education, and particularly to improve the health and well-being of pupils identified as potentially unfit. Fitness clubs have been arranged to encourage the least active pupils to participate. Further assessments are planned to evaluate the impact of this on pupils' health. Staff have noted an increase in the number of pupils attending sports clubs.
- The school gives high priority to safeguarding and child protection. Thorough checks are made on all adults coming into contact with pupils. Training for all adults on child protection and first aid is kept up to date. Staff are vigilant and know what they should do if any child shares sensitive information with them.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well throughout the curriculum and through daily life in school. Pupils' achievements are celebrated publicly so they are taught to appreciate their own success and that of others. High standards are encouraged in all the school does, and pupils develop a strong awareness of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Pupils respect diversity, as seen in the way pupils from different backgrounds work and play together.

- The school promotes British values well throughout the curriculum and through special events from time to time. Pupils are taught to understand how democracy works through elections held in school. They understand the importance of law and rules and how these protect individual liberty by being encouraged to make choices within a safe environment. Pupils learn respect for each other and for the world's major faiths in assemblies and religious education lessons.
- The local authority has played an effective role in helping move the school forwards, knows the school well and thinks highly of its overall effectiveness. During regular focused visits from local authority officers, senior leaders have the opportunity to discuss ways of improving the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is good. Governors challenge leaders and hold them to account for the school's performance. They have regular meetings with senior staff to discuss the impact of their work.
  - Governors maintain a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses in the performance of staff and pupils through visits to the school, detailed reports from the headteacher and links with staff responsible for key areas. They understand assessment data and are aware of how pupils' achievement compares with other similar schools. They are fully aware that achievement dipped last year and why this happened.
  - The governors know the community served by the school very well through the work of the parish and use their knowledge effectively to help the school meet community needs.
  - Governors set challenging targets to ensure the effectiveness of the headteacher and staff. They know how good the teaching is and make sure that teachers' pay increases are linked to their competence and impact on pupils' achievement. They also know how any underperformance is tackled.
  - Governors make sure that all statutory requirements are met effectively, including those relating to safeguarding.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their attitudes to learning are positive and they want to do well. Pupils' behaviour during lessons is good and they work well together. As a result, good learning takes place.
- Pupils respond well to the school's promotion of good behaviour and conduct themselves well at all times. Break and lunch times are calm and orderly, with pupils showing good relationships with each other. Pupils say they would be happy 'if the school were open seven days a week'.
- Pupils are proud of what they do. Work is neat and tidily presented and there is little evidence of any unfinished work. However, pupils do not consistently respond to comments in teachers' marking and do not always correct their work.
- Attendance is broadly average. Pupils arrive to school on time for a prompt start to the school day. Those who attend the breakfast club are well looked after and prepared well for learning.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in and out of school. Work in information and communications (ICT) lessons ensures that pupils develop a good understanding of internet safety.
- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying and know what to do if they ever need help. They say bullying is rare and they believe adults deal with any incidents effectively. School records show that there is little bullying. Any incidents are fully investigated and resolved so the school is a safe place for pupils.
- Staff training on child protection is up to date and adults are vigilant. Staff have a good knowledge of child protection procedures, know what to look out for and are ready to intervene if necessary.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Robust checks on teaching and learning, together with good training opportunities for class teachers and teaching assistants to develop their classroom expertise, have resulted in improved teaching. Teachers new to the school quickly take on board the school's routines so the quality is largely consistent from class to class. Better teaching has had a positive impact on improving pupils' progress.
- Teachers plan well to ensure that all pupils are given work that is matched to their ability, but is difficult enough to enable them to make good progress. Teachers are aware of pupils' capabilities and previous learning. They use this information diligently in planning activities that give pupils of all abilities an equal opportunity to progress well.
- Effective teaching of English and mathematics enables pupils to make good progress in these subject areas. Reading is taught well. Teachers in Key Stage 2 build effectively on the good teaching of phonics in the early years and Key Stage 1 in regular guided reading sessions. Pupils learn to understand and interpret what they read so they become competent readers. Pupils regularly write in a range of different subjects. They redraft and correct their work until they are happy they have written the final and best version. Focused support for small groups in mathematics helps pupils at all levels achieve their potential.
- Teaching assistants have a significant impact in helping pupils to make good progress. They are skilled in the support they give and work effectively with pupils. They help disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to make the same good progress as other pupils. Some teaching assistants are especially skilled in teaching phonics to develop pupils' reading skills. Foreign language speakers who can communicate with pupils are new to the school and speak little English.
- Teachers are particularly good at asking questions and encouraging discussions to extend pupils' learning. They ask searching questions that make pupils think carefully and come up with the answers to their own questions for themselves. There are occasions, however, when teachers do not recognise when pupils are ready to move on to the next steps of learning on their own and do not move them on quickly enough.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly. Teachers point out what pupils have done well and identify key points for improvement. However, teachers do not always make sure that pupils respond to the advice in marking so they can learn from and correct their mistakes.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities in science to investigate, explore and find things out for themselves to build good scientific enquiry skills.

**The achievement of pupils is good**

- The school's leaders have taken effective action to deal with the dip in test results in 2014. This year, achievement throughout the school is good and pupils are reaching the standards they are capable of.
- Many children enter school with attainment below that typical for their age. The weakest areas are in language and communication, particularly speech, and personal development. They make good progress and an average proportion of children reach a good level of development by the time they enter Year 1.
- Achievement by the end of Key Stage 1 is good. Data for the current Year 2 show that the proportions of pupils at the levels expected for their age are much higher than they were on entry to Year 1, showing good progress over the key stage. This year, progress has accelerated and pupils are on track to achieve average standards in reading, writing and mathematics from low starting points.
- Pupils in Year 1 build well on the good start made in Reception in learning early reading skills. The results of the most recent Year 1 phonics screening were broadly average.
- Achievement by the end of Key Stage 2 is now good. Pupils' books, current school assessment data and lesson observations show better standards and good progress in all year groups. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is typically in line with that expected for pupils' age, and higher in some year

groups. Current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach above-average attainment at the end of this year. This represents good achievement for all year groups.

- The most-able pupils are making good progress, with a sharp increase in the numbers reaching the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. This year over half of the pupils in Year 6 are set to reach the higher levels in reading and mathematics and the proportion in writing is similar to last year's national average. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 have made good progress from their starting points at the beginning of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups make good progress and achieve well. There are no significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well. Through effective and carefully chosen support, and sometimes through initial help from bilingual teaching assistants, they quickly learn enough English to access the full curriculum and make the same good progress as their classmates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics as a result of the good individual support they receive.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 remained broadly average overall in 2014 but fell in mathematics. Pupils had made average progress in reading and writing, but not in mathematics. The dip was for one year only; the school's tracking data clearly show that other year groups are making better progress and reaching higher standards in all three subject areas.
- Disadvantaged pupils did not do as well as their classmates in 2014 in mathematics and writing, but better in reading. Gaps in attainment widened over those in 2013. In 2014, those in Year 6 were between two and five terms behind their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics, but between one and two years behind others pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils currently in school have narrowed the gaps between them and other pupils in school and nationally. The latest school assessments show they are making good progress and working at levels within a term of other pupils in school and where they are expected to be nationally for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.

### The early years provision

is good

- Effective leadership of the early years is creating an environment in which children can grow and learn effectively. From starting points that are often below those typical for their age, children achieve well to attain standards at the end of the Reception Year that are close to the national average. Children are prepared well to start Year 1.
- The quality of teaching is good. From their very first day children are encouraged to be curious and to respond to questions asked by adults. The stimulating and exciting environment encourages children to engage actively in learning. This helps them behave well because they are kept interested and occupied.
- Adults are fully aware of what each child knows and is capable of doing. They plan activities that challenge and extend children's knowledge and understanding across all areas of learning. All ability groups do well, particularly in developing early literacy and number skills.
- Adults talk a lot with children to extend their vocabulary and encourage curiosity. This is particularly useful in developing children's speech, which is a weak area on entry to school. As a result, speech develops well. Children interact well with adults, listen carefully and concentrate. They respond enthusiastically to the wide range of interesting activities planned for them.
- Adult-led learning activities are carefully planned to help children develop secure basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Reading is taught well, with children grouped according to their capabilities so teachers can match the work and the reading books accurately to the levels their children are working at and move them on quickly. Learning in adult-led sessions is reinforced through different activities that children can choose and that are linked to the teacher's introduction.

- Children behave well. They get on well with each other and work productively together, remaining focused for extended periods. Children respond to requests quickly, listen politely to adults and each other. Adults are vigilant in making sure that children are safe and secure during their learning and play activities.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103993
<b>Local authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	462570

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	246
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Piddock
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kathryn Hill
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 June 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 505 3595
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