

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Ann's Hill Road, Gosport, Hampshire PO12 3NB

## Inspection dates

4–5 July 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning varies too much across classes and subjects. Consequently, pupils are not making as much progress as they should, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Weak teaching and assessment in the past mean that current pupils have gaps in their skills and knowledge. The quality of teaching is not consistently strong enough to ensure that pupils make rapid progress in order to catch up.
- The achievement of the most able pupils is patchy across key stages 1 and 2. Too many are not fulfilling the potential they demonstrated at the end of Reception.
- The school's detailed assessment information is not used efficiently to track the progress of different groups, including the most able pupils, and to ensure they are suitably challenged.

### The school has the following strengths

- The senior leadership team is improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment quickly. Staff support and understand the widespread changes.
- St Mary's is an inclusive school where pupils respect different people and communities. They have the positive attitudes and values necessary to be good citizens.
- Good provision in the early years means children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Classrooms are attractive and pupils' learning is celebrated very thoughtfully. Pupils enjoy coming to school.
- The school has a strong culture of protecting and caring for its pupils. Pupils feel safe and behave well.
- The governing body is acting with dedication to support the school through a period of change.

## Full report

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

- Raise pupils' achievement, particularly in writing and mathematics, by eradicating inconsistencies in the quality of teaching through:
  - sharing the successful methods evident in the most effective teaching
  - evaluating the impact of the school's approach to teaching basic numeracy skills through problem-solving
  - using the detailed assessment information to track the progress of different groups, including the most able pupils, and to ensure they are suitably challenged.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The school's temporary leadership team has brought stability and a clear direction to the work of the school. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is now improving quickly.
- The headteacher and assistant headteacher for key stage 2 have worked tirelessly to drive improvements. The weaknesses in teaching identified by the previous inspection have been addressed rigorously. Leaders are aware that inconsistencies remain and are continuing their efforts to ensure good teaching across the school.
- The headteacher has played a pivotal role in developing a culture of ambition. The assistant headteacher for key stage 2 has significantly improved assessment and provides an excellent model for colleagues in her own teaching.
- The positive impact of leaders on pupils' achievement is evident in the above-average outcomes for children in the early years and in the Year 1 phonics screening check. The school's progress measures also indicate pockets of improvements, particularly in reading and writing in Year 1 and Year 6.
- Leaders and governors make full use of advice and support available from the local authority. Leaders' reviews of the school are thorough and focus well on the necessary steps for improvement.
- Leaders check how well teachers' skills are developing and use this information effectively to refine the support given. Staff are clear about the high standard of teaching that leaders are working to achieve. Newly qualified teachers are supported well. They bring fresh ideas and make a valuable contribution to the improvement of teaching.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed effectively during lessons and assemblies, and through an increasing range of extra-curricular activities. The school's determination to help pupils 'Grow, learn, play, pray and stay together' underpins the harmonious community. Adults and pupils are mutually respectful. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully included in classroom life.
- Pupils' rich and varied learning prepares them well for life in modern Britain. For example, through debates on 'Brexit' and 'What it means to be British', pupils gain insights into democracy, tolerance and cultural diversity.
- Pupils benefit from extended opportunities to enhance their physical development. This is because funding for physical education (PE) and sports is spent wisely and through the skilful leadership of the PE subject leader.
- The curriculum has been redesigned carefully to help ensure that pupils are engaged and motivated. Links between reading, writing and grammar, and pupils' work across the curriculum, help them see connections within their learning. A problem-solving approach in mathematics provides realistic contexts for much work, although the impact of this method on pupils' basic number skills has not yet been evaluated.
- School leaders plan and review the use of pupil premium funding effectively. More disadvantaged pupils are progressing well in their learning. For example, in

mathematics this year, disadvantaged pupils performed better than others across all year groups.

- Leaders spend additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities efficiently. Additional help for individual pupils is mapped out clearly, indicating specific targets, the support provided, and how well pupils are progressing from their starting points.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are well informed about teaching, learning and pupils' achievement, and the leadership and staffing issues that the school experienced during 2016. They are working hard to support the school during a continuing period of change. Uncertainties about when the school will join a multi-academy trust constrain strategic planning including, for example, the appointment of a permanent headteacher.
- Governors attend extra training, and heed the advice from the local authority. They consider information from external reviews of the school to check what the interim headteacher is telling them about improvement. They meet frequently with school leaders to review progress, and ask insightful and challenging questions.
- There are four vacancies on the governing body, leaving only five to carry out their responsibilities. The diocese has found it difficult to recruit additional governors, who must be Catholic to serve as 'foundation' governors. Despite this, governors carry out their responsibilities effectively.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. On her appointment, the interim headteacher immediately commissioned a review of safeguarding. The review found several weaknesses. These were addressed determinedly and are now resolved.
- Staff are up to date and well informed about safeguarding issues and national guidance. They have had the relevant training, for example in paediatric first aid and safer recruitment. Any concerns are recorded with the utmost care and leaders review information well. Referrals to outside agencies are carried out in a timely manner.
- Leaders and staff take many steps to educate pupils and families about e-safety. Displays around the school show very clearly the range of staff whom pupils can approach with any safeguarding concerns.
- The school site is secure and access by visitors carefully controlled. Potential risks are considered carefully before educational visits. The induction of new staff includes appropriate emphasis on safeguarding.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching and learning is too variable. This means that some pupils are behind where they need to be in their skills and knowledge. Staff skills are improving due to the help and support from school leaders. However, the quality of teaching

across the school is not consistently strong enough to ensure that pupils build well on their starting points.

- The weaknesses identified by the previous inspection are much less evident. Teachers pay more attention to ensuring that pupils write neatly and now give pupils helpful feedback about their learning, in line with school policies. Pupils are aware of what teachers expect from a piece of work. Some inconsistencies remain, however. The most able pupils are sometimes given work that they find too easy and this limits their opportunities to acquire a greater depth of understanding.
- The teaching of reading has greatly improved. Pupils discussed their 'reading journals' enthusiastically and are responding well to the increased opportunities to analyse texts and 'read between the lines' to gain deeper insights into authors' use of language and vocabulary.
- Teachers generally manage pupils' behaviour well. Staff make sure that pupils stay on task and concentrate in lessons. This means that little time is wasted. This is more evident at key stage 2 than key stage 1. In the younger classes, pupils sometimes get over-excited, which spoils the calm and purposeful atmosphere that usually permeates the school.
- Teachers' questioning of pupils is improving and, in some classes, it is a strength. However, staff sometimes give too little attention to deepening and extending the abilities of the most able pupils.
- Good teamwork between staff is evident throughout the school. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in pupils' learning. Teachers increasingly recognise and develop colleagues' skills to support the needs of different groups of pupils in classes. This means that teaching assistants and teachers are increasingly sharing the responsibility for supporting or extending the learning of different pupils.
- Where teaching is most successful, teachers and teaching assistants have a good understanding of pupils' current abilities, as well as good knowledge of the subjects they are covering. Staff use their knowledge to create enjoyable activities that help pupils to develop their understanding.
- Homework is set regularly and in line with school policy. Staff encourage pupils and parents about the value of such opportunities to support and extend their learning.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe in the calm and nurturing environment. One parent commented, 'St Mary's is a lovely, friendly school', reflecting the views of the clear majority. Pupils develop self-confidence and self-awareness and a good understanding about how to be a successful learner. Pupils know they can talk to teachers about any concerns.
- A small minority of parents raised some concerns about safety and bullying in the Ofsted parent survey, Parent View. They were mainly linked to how the school supports pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs. Inspectors found that these pupils are supported well. For the most part, they are fully included in

lessons. Other pupils show tolerance and understanding regarding the occasional misbehaviour of the small number of their classmates with such complex needs.

- Pupils say that bullying is rare and dealt with fairly by staff. They show respect for others and feel that there is rarely any name-calling. They are sure that racist abuse or homophobic language would not be tolerated.
- Work in personal, social and health education, and in other subjects, helps pupils to understand how to avoid potential hazards outside school. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. They are taught about the health risks of smoking, alcohol and drugs and understand the importance of a healthy diet and exercise.
- Effective support for vulnerable pupils helps to minimise barriers to their learning and ensure their safety and well-being. School staff work closely with a range of agencies to ensure that support meets pupils' and families' needs. The procedures to support children looked after by the local authority work well and are enhanced by close liaison with the local authority 'looked-after children' team.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour across the school has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils rise to teachers' expectations of their behaviour. They are generally attentive, work hard and want to learn. Pupils in Year 6 provide good role models in this regard.
- Pupils conduct themselves sensibly, and are considerate and polite in shared areas of the school. They socialise and play constructively together at breaktimes.
- Permanent exclusions are below average but fixed-term exclusions rose last year as the revised behaviour policy was implemented. The rate of exclusion is reducing due to improved systems to support pupils at risk.
- The majority of pupils attend well and love coming to school. Attendance is above average and continuing to improve. The school frequently reinforces the importance of full attendance and promptly follows up any poor attendance. Persistent absence is below national levels.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress and attainment in recent years have been variable. Pupils currently in school are making better progress but are not making rapid enough progress to enable them to reach the standards expected for their age in each year group. The school's assessment information indicates that progress in reading is more consistent than in writing and mathematics.
- The pupils in Year 2, who achieved the expected standards at the end of the early years, have not built well on their starting points. Levels of attainment in the recent national assessments were below average. In contrast, pupils in Year 1 have made good progress through the year and their attainment is above the school's expectations.

- Pupils' achievement in the phonics screening check in Year 1 has steadily improved. The proportion reaching the expected standard is now above average and Year 1 pupils' reading skills are good. Due to a legacy of underachievement and some previously weak teaching, only half of the pupils in Year 2 reached the expected standards in reading and only a third in writing.
- Stronger teaching in key stage 2 means that pupils' progress has accelerated, particularly in Year 6. The number who reached higher standards in writing matched the national picture for the first time in recent years, although the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics combined was below the national average.
- Progress in reading in other year groups in key stage 2 is now good. Pupils in Year 6 discussed their reading preferences maturely, explaining how they would choose a book before a film because, 'You get pictures in your mind.' Progress through key stage 2 in writing and mathematics is too variable, however.
- Initiatives funded through the pupil premium are making a positive impact. The school's assessment information shows that this year pupils who received this funding outperformed their peers in mathematics in every year group. This year, most disadvantaged pupils reached similar or better standards than those nationally in reading, writing and mathematics in the national assessment at the end of both key stages.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make typically expected, and sometimes better, progress from their starting points because teaching in class and in small groups supports their learning well.
- The most able pupils have not habitually fulfilled their potential in recent years. There are a few exceptions, including some of the most able disadvantaged pupils. The most able pupils are not routinely provided with sufficiently challenging activities to enable them to make good progress in all classes, and sometimes spend too much time repeating what they can already do.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The early years leader has the expertise, energy, enthusiasm, and drive to bring about further improvement to what is already very effective provision.
- As children start school, their social, communication, and numeracy skills are broadly in line with expectations for their age. They make good and often rapid progress, and the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is typically above the national average.
- The teaching is very effective. Teachers and teaching assistants work as a cohesive team, ensuring that children are well cared for and feel safe. The early years is underpinned by very warm relationships; adults interact with children, taking every opportunity to develop their social and communication skills and move their learning forward. Working on writing with a group of five children, for example, the teacher encouraged them to 'think about what we want to say, say it out loud, and then write'. The children shared ideas and were clearly delighted with their completed sentences.
- Full advantage is taken of the stimulating indoor and outdoor areas to promote all

areas of learning. Staff successfully encourage children to be curious and explore for themselves. Children behave extremely well. During one 'free-flow' session, children were thoroughly absorbed in a wide variety of tasks relating to the 'pirates' theme. Pupils were practising a puppet show; others were sorting 'gold' coins from a treasure chest. They were thrilled when they successfully found that the key attached to a '9+6 coins' card opened the lock attached to a '15 coins' card.

- Additional funding is used to successfully improve progress and attainment for disadvantaged children. They typically make similar progress to other children. This year, a quarter of the children were supported by additional funding and over half reached a good level of development.
- Staff have developed strong partnerships with parents. All the parents who spoke to inspectors were very positive about their children's experiences and progress through Reception. Reflecting the views of many, one parent commented: 'The teaching in Reception is exceptional. The effort and commitment to improve the outside space has been fantastic and has provided the children with an exciting, enjoyable and nurturing environment.' The leader has produced some highly informative guides for parents about how they can support their children in developing early language and number skills.
- Although the school's overall effectiveness requires improvement, the early years provision has rapidly improved since the previous inspection and provides a very positive start to children's school life. Staff liaise effectively with the 17 or so pre-school settings from which children transfer.
- Children's enthusiasm for learning and good level of development equip them well for the start of Year 1.

## School details

Unique reference number	116394
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10032841

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	267
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jean Watson
Headteacher	Jayne Pavitt
Telephone number	02392 583979
Website	<a href="http://www.stmarysgosport.co.uk">http://www.stmarysgosport.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:lstrong3@st-marysrc-pri.hants.sch.uk">lstrong3@st-marysrc-pri.hants.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	20–21 May 2015

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- St Mary's is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is 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 at the end of Year 6.
- There is one Reception class and one mixed Reception and Year 1 class.
- A private organisation runs a breakfast club and an after-school club. They were not part of this inspection.
- In September 2015, the deputy headteacher was appointed as temporary headteacher

and served until December 2016. In January 2017, the current headteacher was appointed on a temporary basis and two temporary assistant headteachers were appointed. In addition, a deputy headteacher from another school was seconded to the school for two days each week. Along with all Catholic schools in the area, the school is to join a multi-academy trust. Governors are awaiting notification from the diocese about when this is to take place. In the meantime, the deputy headteacher currently on secondment is to take over the headship on a temporary basis from September.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed activities in all year groups. Most observations were undertaken with the headteacher or assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body and a member of the local authority.
- Meetings were also held with pupils to discuss their views on their learning and well-being, and with parents to gain their views about the school.
- Inspectors heard pupils read from Years 1, 2 and 6. They talked to pupils at breaktimes and in the lunch hall, in lessons, and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including information on pupils' performance across the school, school improvement plans, the school's evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment, governors' minutes and curriculum plans.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of books to see what progress pupils had made across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors took account of 21 responses to the Ofsted parent survey, Parent View, and the results of the inspection questionnaire completed by 14 members of staff.

## Inspection team

Rob Crompton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Penny Orme	Ofsted Inspector
James Munt	Ofsted Inspector

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