

St Mary's Catholic Junior School

Shorts Road, Carshalton, Surrey, SM5 2PB

Inspection dates 11–12 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- By the time pupils leave the school, their attainment in English and mathematics and a wide range of other subjects is high.
- Progress is outstanding for all groups of pupils. No pupil is allowed to fall behind for long before they are quickly helped to catch up.
- There is complete consistency in high quality of teaching across the school. Teachers are very enthusiastic, have excellent subject knowledge and a strong belief in deepening pupils' thinking alongside literacy, numeracy and other skills.
- Leaders and managers have high expectations and this together with a relentless drive to get better makes sure the school continues to improve.
- Pupils have extremely mature attitudes to learning and are fully independent, highly motivated learners totally prepared for secondary school.
- Pupils behave extremely well and respond totally to the high expectations of them. They feel very safe in school.
- The curriculum is extremely well planned enabling all pupils to apply and improve their skills in a wide variety of contexts.
- The school works in total harmony with its parent community who subscribe fully to what the school is doing and to how it is led and managed.
- Governors provide highly effective support, challenge and strategic direction for the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons, of which four were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons, observed an assembly and watched part of the Year 3 Nativity play written by the pupils. They also looked at pupils' books and observed other aspects of the school's work.
- Meetings were held with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and school staff. Inspectors undertook tours of the school with pupils. The inspectors also spoke to pupils about their reading and listened to them read. A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 45 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke to a group of parents and carers. They also considered an email and a letter sent from parents or carers to the lead inspector. Inspectors reviewed 21 questionnaire responses from staff.
- A number of documents were looked at, including the school's own data relating to pupils' achievement, the school's self-evaluation summary and school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Martin Marsh, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Jane Richmond	Additional inspector
Michael Lafford	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mary's Catholic Primary School is an average-sized primary school in the Archdiocese of Southwark.
- Less than 10% of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for specific groups, including those known to be eligible for free school meals). This is below average but the proportion is increasing.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs identified at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are much lower than found nationally.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage but a quarter are from minority ethnic heritages, which is higher than average. Only a few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- Since the previous inspection, a new senior leadership team has been established, which has now been in place for three years. The school has also appointed several new governors and there is a new Chair of the Governing Body. In the last two years the school has lost some experienced staff and has appointed five teachers who are new to the profession.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop pupils' ability to understand more precisely the next stage in their learning so that when they assess their own and others' work they can set clear, accurate and challenging targets to help them to improve.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils enter the school in Year 3 with above average attainment and leave with high standards in both English and mathematics and a range of other subjects. Progress in all classes and all year groups is rapid because of high-quality teaching and outstanding individual interventions that do not allow any pupil to fall behind.
- Different groups of pupils make similarly rapid progress. Pupils with special educational needs do better than all pupils nationally while pupils eligible for pupil premium attain well above all pupils nationally. The school completely closes the gap for both groups enabling them to go to the next stage in their learning totally prepared with the skills they need to be successful. Pupils from minority ethnic heritages do as well as their peers.
- A large proportion of pupils reach the highest possible levels and the introduction of the new Level 6 test is being used as an opportunity to stretch more-able pupils even more. Last year, pupils were successfully prepared for the higher level paper in mathematics and this year the extra provision for English is also enabling the most-able pupils to make even more rapid progress in reading and writing.
- Progress is exceptionally good across a range of subjects. Achievement is tracked very closely in all subjects.
- Pupils have many opportunities to use their exceptional skills in literacy and numeracy in all sorts of different contexts enabling them to learn skills in other subjects highly effectively. Pupils of all ages read widely and with enjoyment.
- Pupils' skills in using information and communication technology are particularly strong. In one lesson, Year 6 pupils were able to interrogate a database to make decisions as to how to deploy police resources into areas of most need.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The impact of teaching over time on pupils' achievement is outstanding.
- The school believes strongly that teaching must develop pupils to be independent in their learning. This approach is consistent in every lesson. In addition, teachers use every opportunity to deepen learning through probing pupils' thinking. Pupils are taught to think in different ways which they understand and can explain in great detail. These 'modes' of thinking punctuate most lessons. Pupils and teachers naturally switch between the thinking modes in the lessons.
- Teachers are highly committed and extremely enthusiastic. They have excellent subject knowledge and plan exciting lessons. Pupils and parents and carers are equally positive about the quality of the teaching.
- Excellent relationships enable all parts of lessons to run very smoothly. Social skills are very well developed enabling paired and group work to be highly productive.
- Skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation and calculation are well taught and are reinforced when the opportunity arises. Because the basic skills are so strong, teachers make exceptionally challenging demands of pupils. In one Year 6 class, for example, pupils were analysing a piece of writing by Dylan Thomas thinking about how they could incorporate aspects of his poetic prose style into their own work. This enabled them to make rapid progress in their writing.
- There is a high level of challenge in most lessons. Planning for the range of abilities is very thorough and, as a result, pupils are always totally engaged and work very hard. Teachers and other adults routinely work with a variety of different ability groups enabling them to make even faster progress. If pupils do fall behind, high-quality interventions are put in place to enable them to catch up quickly.
- Checking of learning in lessons is strong and teachers respond to what pupils say and adapt their teaching accordingly. Marking is thorough and supportive and pupils know, in general, how they can improve their work. Pupils are regularly encouraged to assess their own work and that

of others but they do not always understand precisely enough what the next stage is. This makes it difficult for them to accurately set their own targets and to pinpoint what other pupils need to do to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils behave exceptionally well. They enjoy coming to school 'because learning is enjoyable' and 'we are really made to think'. All parents and carers who responded to Parent View feel that their children are well looked after and that the school makes sure they were well behaved.
- The attitudes to learning that pupils develop in their time in school are exceptional. They are highly motivated and enthusiastic learners. One parent or carer spoke about being on a school trip to Brooklands Museum with a group of pupils and marvelling at the knowledge, enthusiasm and interest they showed to the astonishment of the staff of the museum. Pupils take great pride in their work and their school.
- Always polite both to adults and each other, pupils work together extremely well listening to each other, asking and responding to questions intelligently and have highly developed social skills.
- There is consistency among all adults in how to speak to pupils and they correct them on the few occasions when pupils fall short of the very high expectations that the school has of them and that they have of themselves and each other.
- The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn about different forms of bullying, for example during Anti-Bullying Week, and how to be safe on the internet, in the home and in the community. They feel entirely safe in school and bullying is extremely rare and not tolerated in any form.
- Pupils have a highly developed understanding of right and wrong and respect people's different faiths, religions and cultures.
- Attendance is well above average and continuing to rise. Other than for reasons of illness there are no pupils with a poor attendance record.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- 'I cannot speak more highly about the school. We are honoured to have our children here.' These words summed up the views of many parents and carers. All parents and carers who responded on Parent View would recommend this school to another parent or carer.
- Leaders are passionate and are relentless in their drive to continue improving. The headteacher is an inspirational leader and has the total support of all staff. One parent or carer wrote, '...under (her) strong leadership, (the school) provides equally for all abilities, offering different solutions for different learning abilities, providing inclusive support or challenge at both ends of the (ability) spectrum and making imaginative use of precious teaching resources'. The inspectors totally agree with this.
- Leaders at all levels work relentlessly to drive up standards of teaching. Despite losing some experienced staff in recent years, the school has developed the newly qualified teachers that have replaced them so that they are able to teach lessons which are consistently of high quality.
- There are rigorous systems to check on the quality of teaching. Teachers support each other extremely well and there is much sharing of good practice.
- The curriculum is very well constructed to enable pupils to develop skills in other subjects and apply their skills of English and mathematics in a range of different contexts. Pupils are assessed well and there is progression in planning so that skills can continue to be built upon. Integrated well, within all areas of the curriculum, are excellent opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school's commitment to equality of opportunity ensures that all groups of pupils achieve outstandingly well. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.

■ The local authority provides light touch support for this outstanding school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is highly effective. Governors visit the school regularly and have an exceptional knowledge about the school which they use to challenge in a very supportive way. They are fully involved in the decision-making process and in creating plans for the future. The Chair of the Governing Body ensures that individuals and the governing body as a whole receive appropriate training so they can continue to improve. Financial management is excellent and the governors are aware of the impact of the pupil premium funding and how it has been used to narrow the gap in attainment. The school's policy as to how teachers and leaders are rewarded for performance and how this fits in with the new appraisal system based on the teachers' standards is well understood. The governing body gives good support to the school in meeting safeguarding responsibilities, particularly regarding the safety of pupils and the appointment of staff.

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	102994
Local authority	Sutton
Inspection number	402907

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	264
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bernard Tomkins
Headteacher	Shirley Hulme
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2007
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