

# St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School Aided

Great Lime Road, Forest Hall, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE12 7AB

**Inspection dates** 12–13 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils thrive in the school's caring, 'family' environment. They enjoy coming to school, feel extremely safe and say that teachers make learning 'fun'.
- Attitudes to learning are exemplary. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they respond very well to their teachers' high expectations.
- Because of good, and sometimes outstanding teaching, pupils make good progress from their individual starting points and achieve well.
- The overwhelmingly majority of parents feel that their children are happy, safe and well-behaved in school.
- The executive headteacher, ably supported by a talented new leadership team, has been instrumental in bringing about rapid improvements to the school since the previous inspection.
- A relentless focus on improving the quality of writing and mathematics has led to increased levels of attainment and accelerated progress.
- Governors, leaders, and all staff share the executive headteacher's firm commitment to provide the best personal and academic education for all pupils in St. Mary's.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teaching is yet outstanding.
- Progress is not yet outstanding because some activities are not matched closely enough to pupils' targets for improvement.
- Pupils do not always have sufficient time to respond to the improvement points that teachers give in written feedback.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 15 lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, they made a number of short visits to other lessons.
- Inspectors heard pupils of different ages read and looked at pupils' work in exercise books.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, staff, a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school development plan, monitoring reports, arrangements for safeguarding and records of pupils' attainment and progress.
- They took into account the views of parents through the school's own surveys and the responses of 19 parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Questionnaires completed by staff were also taken into consideration.

## Inspection team

Carol Gater, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Derek Sleightholme

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Mary's is a smaller-than-average sized primary school with an increasing number of pupils on roll.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has received Healthy Schools and Silver Eco Awards.
- The executive headteacher, who is a national leader of education, took up post in May 2011 and leads two schools. When he is not present, two assistant headteachers lead the school.
- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to staffing.
- The school is now an accredited provider of the leadership programme, 'Successful teaching: successful learning'.

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

- In order to further accelerate progress, increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding by:
  - sharing the outstanding practice that exists within the school
  - providing pupils with sufficient time to act on improvement points given by teachers in their marking
  - ensuring that all activities are closely matched to pupils' next steps in learning.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- At St. Mary's, most children start school with skills that are broadly typical for their age. They quickly settle into the welcoming environment and become confident, independent learners. They make good progress and, increasingly, leave Year 6 with standards above the national average. In addition, more pupils are reaching the higher levels and the percentage making good progress in both English and mathematics is higher than the national figure.
- Pupils' achievement has improved since the last inspection. Attainment and progress in mathematics and writing have improved because actions taken by the leaders of these subjects have improved the quality of teaching and learning.
- Attainment by the end of Year 2 has been broadly average. However, current records show that the proportion of pupils reaching and exceeding age-related expectations by the end of Year 2 is rapidly improving. Work in books confirms that progress is now good across Key Stage 1.
- All teachers focus strongly on learning and pupils take this on board. In lessons, they reflect on how well they are doing and advise each other on how to improve their work. A pupil in Year 2 said, 'I love learning, especially in maths!'
- Pupils enjoy reading. The systematic teaching of phonics (linking sounds and letters) gets children off to a good start and in the Reception class children confidently use their knowledge to build words. In Year 3, pupils spoke enthusiastically about an author they have researched and of how this has encouraged them to read more of her books at school and at home. Year 6 pupils are very articulate in sharing their preferences for different authors.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium make good progress. This is because the additional funding has been used well to support any child at risk of falling behind. Individual and small group tuition, particularly in reading and mathematics, has developed pupils' self-esteem, as well as accelerating their progress. They attain equally as well as other pupils in the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same good progress as their peers. This is because early identification of need is swiftly followed by high quality support.
- The school ensures that pupils from minority ethnic groups or those who have English as an additional language have the same opportunities as other pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants liaise with parents and ensure that appropriate support is in place. Records show that these pupils make rapid progress.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The overall quality of teaching in all subjects is good and there are examples of outstanding practice. Because of this, pupils are now consistently making good progress. Parents overwhelmingly agree that this is the case.
- Teachers create a positive environment and pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. They listen attentively to their teachers' instructions and settle quickly to work, eager to do their best. Even the youngest children in Reception are keen to write, for example, making long lists of what to take on a journey. Year 1 pupils experiment with language to describe items to put in an explorer's box. One boy suggested he was a 'magpie', stealing good words.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Pupils say that teachers always help when 'you are stuck' and will 'take as much time as it needs for you to get it right'.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations and skilfully use questioning to extend pupils' thinking.
- Reading is well taught and dedicated sessions for phonics, guided and individual tuition have led to good progress. Teachers promote a love of reading. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the library bus that visits the school.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, a wide variety of activities engage children in their

learning. Observations are now more clearly focused on this learning and they are recorded in individual learning journals. This assessment is used to plan new activities that increasingly provide more challenge.

- Teaching is characterised by imaginative lessons that enthuse and inspire learners. The stimulus is often based in real-life contexts. For example, Year 6 became expert fairground planners, using computers to research attractions before writing a report. In the mixed Year 4/5 class, learning about parallel and perpendicular lines was linked to famous architects and buildings. Year 2 pupils practised direction and position on a huge grid in the playground. There is a 'buzz' in these lessons and pupils rise to the challenges set by the teacher.
- Lessons build on previous learning and move at a good pace. Teachers continually remind pupils to check their work against the success criteria.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively to stimulate pupils' imagination and to clarify teaching points. Pupils' work shows that they use their ICT skills proficiently across the curriculum.
- Teachers mark work thoroughly and give good prompts for improvement. However, in some cases they allow insufficient time for pupils to respond and, therefore, opportunities for more rapid learning are lost.
- Where teaching is not yet outstanding, activities are not always planned tightly enough around pupils' next steps for improvement.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. From an early age, they take turns and listen to one another. As they move through the school, they work independently or collaboratively as the task demands. They are extremely polite and considerate to each other and to adults. They respect and celebrate their cultural differences.
- Behaviour around the school and outside is excellent. Governors who accompany pupils on visits say that behaviour is exemplary and that the pupils are excellent ambassadors for the school.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school. They are aware of all the procedures that keep them safe. Since the last inspection, a new entrance to the building has enhanced on-site security. Through the curriculum, pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including e-safety.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying in the school. They are very proud of a group of pupils who independently drew up anti-bullying guidelines, should any incidents occur.
- Older pupils act as buddies for the very young children, helping them to settle in to school and taking the roles of reading partners.
- Parents and staff who completed questionnaires agree that pupils' behaviour is outstanding and that school provides a very safe environment.
- Pupils have a strong sense of their role in the local and wider community. They act as Energy Heroes, saving electricity in school. The school council regularly plans activities, such as a pyjama day, to raise funds for people less fortunate than themselves.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The outstanding leadership of the executive headteacher has brought about rapid change in a relatively short time. He has re-structured the leadership team and deployed existing and new staff strategically to ensure that teaching is at least good although it is not yet outstanding across the school.
- Enthusiastic and skilled new leaders have implemented actions that have improved attainment, particularly in writing and mathematics. They work alongside the headteacher to monitor the quality of teaching. These leaders have provided exceptional guidance and support for colleagues.

- The headteacher has established a rigorous tracking system and all teachers are aware of the challenging targets for pupils' progress. Performance management is used well in line with salary progression.
- Work with the partner school has proved extremely beneficial in sharing expertise. As a small school, the link has afforded more opportunities for professional development and training.
- Leaders at all levels promote equality of opportunity and are proactive in tackling all forms of discrimination. Funding has been targeted to support those who are deemed to be more vulnerable. The school provides quality support to ensure that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs continue to make good progress.
- The rich curriculum promotes basic skills within a very stimulating context. Links with members of the community and businesses provide excellent opportunities for pupils to widen their horizons. There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs as well as planned visits and visitors. Talented teachers and musicians provide pupils with opportunities to learn to play musical instruments including ukulele and samba drums. Forty pupils take part in the school's Musical Youth Theatre and perform in local events. These experiences promote pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, and social development.
- The local authority's well-targeted support has contributed to the school's improvement journey. Now, with a strong leadership team and issues from the last inspection resolved, the school has good capacity for even further improvement.
- Safeguarding is given a high profile and all statutory requirements are very securely met.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors share the same vision as the headteacher. They are passionate that the school remains at the heart of the parish community, providing the very best education for every child. They are extremely knowledgeable about the strengths of the school and the areas to develop. They have been rigorous in appointing new staff and fully understand the link between teachers' performance and pay. Governors are keen to take on responsibilities, attend new training and are aware of their role in monitoring the school's performance. They authorise funding, including pupil premium, to provide extra support, and check the impact it has on pupil outcomes.

## 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>	108620
<b>Local authority</b>	North Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	405184

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	155
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Margaret Henderson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen Fallon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 May 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 2008381
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