

St Mary Immaculate Catholic Primary School

Wathen Road, Warwick, CV34 5BG

Inspection dates

27–28 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- Children get a good start to school life in the pre-school and Reception classes. Teachers and other adults create a welcoming and vibrant place in which children develop their skills well.
- Pupils throughout the school make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, standards are rising.
- Teachers make lessons interesting. They ensure that the work enables pupils of all abilities to make good progress.
- Pupils feel safe in school because they know it is secure and say that the adults watch out for their safety. Pupils understand what constitutes safe and unsafe situations outside school and learn how to recognise and deal with them.
- Behaviour in and around school is good. Pupils of all ages get on well together. Older pupils willingly help younger ones and act as good role models.
- The headteacher has considerably improved teaching and learning since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher has developed a strong leadership team and all leaders regularly check how well pupils are doing. They make sure that any at risk of falling behind are quickly helped to keep up.
- The governors are very supportive. They ask challenging questions to check that leaders are improving the school and visit regularly to see for themselves.
- The school creates a nurturing and caring environment for pupils based on its religious beliefs and values. It also recognises the importance of pupils respecting other faiths and cultures both in the school and in the wider world.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a few lessons some teachers do not check how well pupils are doing regularly enough.
- The leadership roles in early years are not clear. This means that some practices in the separate classes do not complement each other as well as they could.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in nine lessons or parts of lessons, six of which were seen together with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other staff, a group of pupils and three members of the governing body.
- Informal discussions were held with parents.
- The inspector took account of the 28 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the nine completed staff questionnaires.
- The inspector observed the school's work and reviewed a range of documentation including: the school's checks on its performance; its analysis and tracking of pupils' progress; records of behaviour and safety; school improvement plans; records relating to classroom observations and the management of staff performance; safeguarding arrangements; records of meetings of the governing body.
- The inspector also looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and checked information on attendance.

Inspection team

Susan Hughes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years start in a pre-school class where they attend part-time. Most move to the full-time Reception class at the beginning of the year in which they are five years old.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is above average. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- At around one in eight, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (those supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority) is slightly above average, at one in three.
- The pre-school teacher joined the school in January 2014.
- The school works closely with a National Leader in Education at the Lawrence Sheriff Teaching School.
- 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding, by ensuring that all teachers regularly check how well pupils are doing in lessons and adjust the work accordingly in order to help them make even more rapid progress.
- Ensure that leadership roles in the early years are clear so that they can build on the progress already made to ensure continuity between the pre-school and Reception classes.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's determination and commitment is evident in the rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and achievement since the previous inspection. He has built a skilled team of leaders who track individual pupils' progress to make sure none are falling behind. Any pupils at risk of doing so are quickly identified and appropriate support provided to make sure they keep up.
- Subject leaders check that their subjects are taught well. They work alongside any teachers who need help, and give guidance to make sure that the quality of teaching is good or better. The appraisal system, which rewards teachers for the progress their pupils make, has contributed to the improved teaching. Teachers are clear about the expectations of them and receive training and support to help them meet their targets.
- The school has formed strong partnerships with local schools. This enables staff to share expertise and attend joint training. The Lawrence Sheriff Teaching School has provided good support, particularly in helping some teachers develop their good practice to become outstanding.
- The school is developing links with other schools so that pupils can work together or compete against each other in sport. The primary sports funding has been effectively used to provide more opportunities for competitive sports and pupils are becoming increasingly successful in competitions. They did very well in handball last year while competing against much larger schools.
- The school is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. It makes sure that all groups of pupils achieve equally well. The pupil premium money is well used to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve at least as well as other pupils. One-to-one or small group support helps these pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- While the school has a strong Christian and Catholic ethos, it makes sure that pupils of all faiths and backgrounds feel valued. Pupils discuss the importance of respecting the views and beliefs of others and demonstrate this in the respect they show each other. Wall displays record discussions about the freedom to choose and hold other faiths or beliefs. Pupils who were learning about how the Magna Carta identified early recognition of human rights.
- A varied curriculum supports the strong spiritual, social, moral and cultural provision for pupils. For example Shakespeare week, where each class studied a different play, learning about different world religions, singing at the local hospital, and performing in music festivals all help to develop pupils' cultural and social awareness. The school council members are elected by their classmates and pupils see this as fair. They are well prepared for life in modern multicultural and democratic Britain.
- Leaders, including governors, make sure that the school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet national requirements. They ensure that the school is a safe place for both adults and pupils. All staff, governors and any volunteers supporting pupils are checked to ensure their suitability for working with children.
- The local authority has supported the school well since the previous inspection. It has brokered the help of other schools, worked with senior leaders to check pupils' achievement and has provided some training for governors.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are very supportive and active in checking how well the school is doing. They use achievement data well to make sure no groups of pupils are falling behind and ask challenging questions of the headteacher and other leaders. Governors hold regular meetings with individual leaders and visit the school often with a clear focus on how it is carrying out the agreed plans for improvement.
 - Governors know that the appraisal system is supporting the good teaching. They make sure that teachers only progress up the pay scale if their pupils achieve well.
 - Finances are managed well. Governors rigorously check that the pupil premium is supporting

disadvantaged pupils and helping them do as well as their classmates. They know that the sports funding is giving pupils more opportunities to take part in competitive sports and also makes sure pupils throughout the school learn to swim.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite and courteous and older pupils act as good role models for younger ones. For example, Year 6 pupils read with pre-school children during their lunchtime. Other Year 5 and Year 6 pupils read regularly with pupils in Year 3 and Year 4. In assemblies, the older pupils are very attentive and sing well, setting a good example for younger ones.
- Teachers and other adults in the school, including in the early years, are excellent role models. They treat pupils in a caring, respectful manner and pupils respond by treating each other equally kindly and respectfully. Pupils told the inspector that they all get on well together. All the parents who completed Parent View agree that behaviour is good.
- Pupils readily take on roles of responsibility and say that they feel their views are listened to. For example, the school council played an active part in assessing the impact of the sports coaching in lessons. They have requested a friendship bench in case anyone feels lonely at playtime. Also, they are currently involved in making sure there are no areas in the school where pupils feel less safe than others.
- Pupils are very positive about their learning. They told the inspector that they like challenging work and this makes learning enjoyable. Even if the work is not so challenging and pupils occasionally lose focus, they do not disrupt other pupils' learning. Pupils who find behaving well difficult are sensitively supported so that their behaviour improves and lessons are rarely disrupted.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that the adults in the school help them feel safe. All pupils spoken to felt that there was someone they could go to in school if they had a problem.
- Lessons such as the 'Taking Care' sessions help pupils understand what constitutes safe and unsafe situations outside school. They learn about safe places, safe relationships and how to explain to someone if they feel uncomfortable or anxious. Pupils are clear about how to keep themselves safe on the road and when using the internet and understand why precautions are needed.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and the different forms it can take, including verbal and cyber bullying. They told the inspector that bullying is very rare, and any incidents are quickly sorted out. All parents who completed Parent View agree that bullying is dealt with well in school.
- The school has worked closely with parents to make sure their children attend regularly. Attendance has improved and is now above average.

The quality of teaching is good

- The enthusiasm and encouragement of teachers inspire pupils to try hard. Interesting and challenging tasks in lessons enable pupils of different abilities to make good progress. For example, in Years 5 and 6 some pupils were working out the likelihood of throwing a certain number on dice, others looked at multiple possibilities while most-able pupils combined fractions and decimals to express probability.
- Teachers' marking in books provides very clear guidance to pupils as to how they can improve their work. Pupils are given time to respond to the advice which helps them move on in their learning. They regularly reflect on how well they, or their working partner, have done.
- Reading is taught well. From the early years and through Key Stage 1, pupils learn phonic skills (the

sounds letters represent in words). They use these with increasing confidence to read unfamiliar words. During the inspection, a Year 1 pupil successfully sounded out 'splendid' and a Year 2 pupil confidently read 'fearful' in her reading book.

- Writing is taught well. Skills learnt in literacy lessons are practised and developed in other subjects. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils were finding out about Florence Nightingale and practised their literacy skills while writing about how dirty the army hospitals were.
- Mathematics is taught well. Teachers build on the skills that pupils already know and give them opportunities to use them in practical situations. When conducting scientific investigations, for example, pupils use measurement and calculation skills and graphs for presenting the results.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make particularly good progress. Their specific needs are quickly identified and appropriate support provided. This often includes help from additional adults either in the classroom, in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. The adults work effectively alongside the classteachers who make sure they are well-briefed about the learning expectations.
- Additional adults also support disadvantaged pupils and those who speak English as an additional language when appropriate. For example, some pupils are helped by learning certain vocabulary in a small group before it is introduced to the whole class. On other occasions more focused adult help gives them confidence to complete challenging work. The additional adults are also mindful of allowing pupils to work alone so that they do not become too dependent on adult help.
- During lessons, most teachers check regularly to see how pupils are progressing. They adapt the work so that pupils make the best progress they can. Occasionally, however, some pupils can be left too long without checking and they then lose focus on their learning.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Standards at the end both Key Stage 1 and 2 were broadly average in 2014. They have improved since the previous inspection and showed good progress in recent years. Pupils made particularly good progress in writing by the end of Key Stage 2.
- School data and work in books show that pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school. This means that year on year their standards steadily rise. Pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 are working at above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Although it varies from year to year, pupils typically start in Key Stage 1 with broadly average standards, though literacy is weaker than other subjects. As a result of good phonics teaching, the results of the 2014 national screening check on how well Year 1 pupils understand phonics were above average.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress. Those who start with little English are sensitively supported in the classroom and individually to help them develop their vocabulary. As they acquire the English language they are able to work successfully alongside other pupils and make good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well from their starting points. In 2014 by the end of Key Stage 2, disadvantaged pupils were three terms behind the rest of their classmates in mathematics, one and a half terms behind in reading and nine terms behind in writing. In relation to all pupils nationally, however, they were only a term behind in mathematics and writing, which is better than the national gap. In writing, they were about two terms behind other pupils nationally, the same as the national gap. Disadvantaged pupils currently in Year 6 are working between two and three terms behind their peers. In the rest of the school, however, disadvantaged pupils are working at a similar level to their classmates, and in some cases at a higher level.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. School data for 2014

show that they made especially good progress in the spring and summer terms once individual support programmes had become embedded. Those currently in the school are making at least as much progress as other pupils, though sometimes from much lower starting points.

- The most-able pupils make progress that is equally good. More pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 are working at higher levels, particularly in writing and mathematics, than in previous years.

The early years provision

is good

- The early years teachers work well together and have created safe, vibrant learning environments for the children to develop their skills. Good teaching and joint planning means that children cover similar topics in each class and make good progress. The staff have developed a consistent approach to assessing how well the children are doing to ensure continuity when children move from the pre-school to the Reception class.
- Exciting activities, both inside and outdoors, interest children and develop a range of skills. For example, while learning about cold climates, one child brought in his collection of toy penguins. Other children chatted enthusiastically about the types of creatures that live together on the ice, developing their language skills and understanding of the world. Children behave well, concentrate on what they are doing and happily share toys and equipment.
- Although this changes from year to year, children generally start school with most skills typical for their age, though weaker in literacy and numeracy. The good progress they make is reflected in the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development in 2014 which was just above average. Pupils start in Year 1 well prepared for Key Stage 1 work.
- While the early years teachers are developing good partnership working, lack of clarity regarding leadership roles means that there is not a clear overview of systems and procedures. As a result some practices do not support each other. For example, home visits scheduled for when children start in the Reception class means that some of the children have already been in school for a year before the home visit take place.

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	125717
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	453449

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julia FitzSimons
Headteacher	Robert Gargan
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2013
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