

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Batley

Upton Street, Batley, West Yorkshire, WF17 8PH

Inspection dates 7–8 July 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.

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the last inspection. They make good progress from starting points that are below those typical for their age.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well because their progress is closely checked. They often perform better than other pupils in the school.
- The quality of provision in the early years is good. Children make good progress during their time in the Nursery and Reception classes and are ready for learning in Year 1.
- Teaching has improved because the leadership team has put in place effective and appropriate support to improve teachers' skills and knowledge.
- The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher, middle leaders and governors. The headteacher delegates responsibilities and encourages staff to share good practice and to work effectively as a team. This is helping them to drive forward improvements in teaching and learning.
- Since the last inspection, the work of the governing body has been successfully reviewed. Governors are actively involved and know the school well. This helps them to provide effective support and appropriate challenge to promote improvement.
- The school is a safe and happy place in which to learn. Pupils take a pride in their school and are well behaved.
- The values of respect, equality and fairness are at the heart of the school's work. Teachers and pupils get on well together. The vast majority of pupils show a mature sense of mutual respect towards each other and for adults.
- The curriculum engages pupils because it is interesting, varied and helps them to learn. They like listening to visiting speakers. Pupils enjoy trips out of school, which give them opportunities to participate in exciting activities that link different subjects together.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teachers have yet to utilise fully the recently introduced assessment system in order to evaluate pupils' achievement accurately.
- Opportunities are sometimes missed in lessons for all pupils to consolidate their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills, and to write for different purposes in a range of situations.
- Some pupils have not acquired the basic number skills they need to solve mathematical problems successfully.
- Occasionally, the pace of learning is not fast enough, especially for the most-able pupils. This stops them from moving on quickly with their learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons, one of which was observed jointly with the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and assessed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Inspectors observed pupils in the playground and during lunchtime.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in their books and in the learning journals of children in the early years.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, key stage coordinators, the two numeracy leaders and the acting special educational needs coordinator. An inspector met with five members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body. A meeting was held with the School Improvement Partner.
- Two groups of pupils discussed their opinions about the school and their learning with inspectors. The inspectors listened to several pupils read.
- The inspectors took account of 20 staff questionnaires and an internal parental questionnaire. Eighteen responses to Ofsted's online parent survey (Parent View) were also considered. Inspectors held discussions with parents during the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including minutes from meetings of the governing body, pupils' achievement data, the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Pauline Pitman, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Doreen Davenport

Additional inspector

Mark Williams

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The early years consists of a part-time morning and afternoon Nursery and a full-time Reception class.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported through the pupil premium, is average. The pupil premium is additional government funding which supports pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school provides a range of after-school clubs.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher were appointed permanently in April 2015, having previously carried out these roles in an acting capacity.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding overall, in order to raise achievement further, by:
 - supporting pupils to master their basic number skills so they gain greater confidence and accuracy in solving mathematical problems
 - providing more interesting opportunities for pupils to perfect their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills and to write for different purposes in a range of situations across the curriculum
 - increasing the pace of learning for the most-able pupils so that they can quickly move on to the next steps in their learning and reach higher standards.
- Continue to support all teachers to develop their confidence and ability to use the newly introduced methods to track and evaluate pupils' achievement in order to assess pupils' progress accurately.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is highly committed to the school and the community it serves, and promotes British values of respect and equality of opportunity actively. She encourages pupils to understand diversity and discourages discrimination in any form. She has successfully ensured that pupils gain a range of experiences to support them to become good citizens and to help them to prepare for life in modern Britain. The school is successful in promoting these aims and in fostering good relations.
- Since the last inspection, the headteacher has effectively led the drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching is effective and actions have been taken to develop teachers' subject knowledge and expertise. Professional development, coupled with raised expectations, are having a positive impact. Teachers now share the headteacher's enthusiasm and drive to raise standards further.
- More recently, the headteacher has delegated greater responsibility to the deputy headteacher who supports her in closely monitoring achievement and in making swift and effective changes to what the school provides. The school makes better use of the information about pupils' performance and staff meet regularly to discuss any gaps in pupils' learning. For example, the school's leaders are putting strategies in place to support the most-able pupils to reach higher standards.
- The deputy headteacher has supported all staff to use new methods to assess pupils' progress so that they can plan their teaching more precisely. However, yet not all teachers are confidently using the new system to accurately evaluate pupils' achievement.
- The school has been well supported by the local authority and staff have acted upon any advice received. The school is about to link with outstanding schools within the wider diocese in order to learn from others how to improve their practice even further.
- The senior and middle leadership team now have the skills to engage fully in the drive for improvement. Key stage leaders know the strengths within the school and understand what steps to take to move the school towards outstanding. Following recent training, the teachers responsible for leading mathematics are putting in place appropriate actions to embed the new curriculum and to raise pupils' achievement in the subject.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils are encouraged to be mindful of others, to be respectful and to acquire the skills they need to become successful members of the school and the wider community.
- The interesting and varied curriculum encourages pupils to be dazzled by the beauty of art, the pleasure music can bring and to enjoy drama. During the inspection, the school promoted a strong sense of community when it presented a very successful end of year play, which parents thoroughly enjoyed. However, not all pupils have mastered the basic number skills they need to solve mathematical problems successfully. There are also missed opportunities for pupils to develop the accuracy of, and range in, their writing.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and are effective in protecting children. The school is very diligent about this aspect of its work. Leaders ensure that all staff and governors are up-to-date with their training and know what to do if they have any emerging concerns.
- Pupil premium funding is used wisely and is having a positive impact on disadvantaged pupils' learning. These pupils make good progress because their learning is tracked very closely and funding has been used to appoint additional staff to provide effective support, when needed. For example, this year additional mathematics classes were set up and have been effective in supporting disadvantaged Year 6 pupils to reach the expected levels.
- The primary physical education and sport funding has been used effectively to enhance pupils' participation in sports and their health and well-being. Through the North Kirklees Sports Partnership, the funding has also supported teachers to develop their ability to teach physical education and sport skills. Pupils now participate in dance and gymnastics and new equipment has been purchased. Pupils participate in inter-school league football, festival of sports and annual cross-country events.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the last inspection, the structure and membership of the governing body has changed. Governors now have a deeper understanding about the quality of teaching and what the school needs to do to secure further improvement. Key governors understand the systems for performance management and now have the skills to consider what needs to be done to tackle any underperformance and to reward

good teaching.

- Governors closely analyse data about the school's performance, including the impact of pupil premium funding on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. This helps governors to ask searching questions and to identify any areas of weakness.
- Governance is effective and governors are involved in the life of the school. They take seriously their individual roles and responsibilities. They challenge the school's leaders but acknowledge that even more can be done to hold them to account in order to raise standards further.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are very polite, friendly and welcoming. This is because the headteacher, supported by her colleagues and governors, sets high standards and encourages pupils to realise their own potential. Each class is encouraged to develop its own mission statement to reflect the values held by the school. For example, Class 11 state the importance of kindness, respect and friendliness and Class 5 want to help others to learn.
- The vast majority of pupils genuinely want to learn and have developed good attitudes to their learning. This is because they have built strong relationships with their teachers and are surrounded by caring and supportive adults. They enjoy coming to school and take pride in their school and in their community.
- There are very few incidents of poor behaviour in the classroom, which means that pupils' learning is not disturbed. Occasionally, a minority of pupils, who find it harder to follow classroom routines, misbehave. Teachers have put in place effective action plans to support these pupils to improve their behaviour. Other pupils are very tolerant because they understand the particular difficulties faced by some of their peers. They recognise that teachers deal with minor disruptions very quickly, enabling them to get back to their learning promptly.
- Incidents of bullying of any kind are rare. Occasionally, pupils fall out with their friends, but they quickly make up and enjoy playing and learning together. The playground is a busy, happy place. Staff are very watchful and look after the pupils well. The small number of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties are well supervised. Pupils have a mature understanding of discrimination and inequality; they talk sensibly about why it is important to show respect and to value differences. Pupils care for others; this was demonstrated during the inspection when Year 6 boys took appropriate care of younger pupils and those with disabilities or special educational needs. They made sure that these pupils were able to eat lunch with friends and were not isolated.
- Attendance has improved but is below the national average. The school has taken steps to address this, including the use of a local authority parent-liaison officer. Attendance is now monitored more closely and parents are contacted if the school is not notified of absence. A particular focus on improving the attendance of the small number of pupils who have been persistently absent has had a positive impact, resulting in a considerable reduction in the proportion of pupils who frequently miss school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff are well trained in safeguarding procedures and there are effective structures to report any emerging issues to the designated person in school or, where necessary, to the local safeguarding team.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe because the school has been fastidious in supporting them to understand some of the dangers they may face. For example, they are taught to keep safe when they are swimming or cycling. All pupils understand the risks of using social media sites and are encouraged to consider the dangers associated with drugs misuse.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Senior leaders now monitor teaching and learning more precisely and scrutinise pupils' books more frequently to check on their progress. Teachers have attended relevant training and are now better equipped to learn from each other and to try new ideas to promote learning. For example, there has been a significant improvement in the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) following some dedicated training. Regular, well-planned sessions within the early years and Key Stage 1 are supporting more pupils to practise the sounds that letters make to improve their reading and writing. As a result, a higher proportion than average have achieved the standards expected of them in the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1.

- The school has designed a curriculum which increasingly encourages pupils' greater participation, especially for boys. For example, projects on coastal erosion and the Vikings inspired pupils to learn more about history and geography and to use this knowledge to develop their creative skills, as well as those in reading and writing. In one Key Stage 2 class, pupils were very interested in learning about the Suffragettes while in another, pupils were inspired by a trip to an art gallery. The teacher capitalised on their enthusiasm and provided opportunities to link art with poetry. However, sometimes not enough is done to encourage all pupils to consolidate and improve their use of grammar, punctuation and spelling for different purposes, so they can write with accuracy and confidence across the curriculum.
- Teachers make good use of technology to enhance learning. For example, pupils are able to redraft their writing in the computer room, while others improve their handwriting by following an interactive computer programme which helps them to form letters correctly.
- Additional adults support pupils well by carefully explaining tasks so that pupils understand what they are learning. Sometimes they work with small groups of pupils to help them understand new concepts or to practise new skills. There have also been improvements in support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Teachers and additional adults plan their work carefully and support them to make good progress from their individual starting points. The teaching of reading is effective. Pupils read regularly and take books home. Most pupils enjoy reading and are able to discuss, with some maturity, their favourite authors and books. Year 6 enjoyed meeting a visiting author.
- The leaders of mathematics are very active and involved in supporting teachers to improve their teaching of the subject. This is having a good impact on the quality of teaching. They have taken time to rethink their approaches to teaching the new curriculum. Equipment has been purchased to develop pupils' visual understanding of mathematics and recent training promoted highly successful learning in Year 2. Pupils were encouraged to use real-life pictorial representations to help them improve their understanding of money before moving on to a more abstract use of numbers. However, pupils' basic number skills are less well developed in some classes, which means they are unable to use their skills to solve mathematical problems accurately and confidently.
- Actions have been taken to improve teachers' marking and feedback to pupils. This has been effective. Many teachers provide helpful ideas to encourage pupils to consider how they can improve their work. Sometimes, older pupils are encouraged to mark their own work to help them to reflect on their learning. However, some younger pupils do not quite understand what they need to do because feedback is not always easy for them to understand.
- The teaching of writing has improved but leaders recognise that more needs to be done. Pupils enjoy writing and display their work proudly around the school. During literacy lessons, teachers encourage pupils to plan and redraft their work before starting to write. For example, in Key Stage 1 the teacher effectively supported pupils to perform a play for each other. They confidently experimented with language in preparation for writing.
- Teachers have built strong relationships with their pupils which promote a love of learning. They make learning fun and provide a range of interesting activities which stimulate pupils' interest and enthusiasm for learning. Teachers plan carefully structured lessons and ask relevant questions to reinforce previous learning. They guide learning by reshaping tasks and encouraging pupils to research information or to use dictionaries to find new vocabulary. However, occasionally the pace of learning, especially for the most-able pupils, is not fast enough and can limit their progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the last inspection. They make good progress from starting points that are often below those typical for their age.
- Over time, the achievement of pupils in Key Stage 1 has been broadly average. In 2014, there was a dip in achievement in writing. This was addressed very quickly and improvements made in teaching. A high proportion of pupils in the current Year 2 have made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics this year from their starting points. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels in reading and writing has improved.
- Since the last inspection, Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment has improved in reading, writing and mathematics and is similar to the national average. Improvement has continued this year with all pupils attaining at least the expected Level 4 in writing. Attainment in mathematics has been weaker than other subjects because pupils did not acquire the basic number skills they needed earlier on in their school life. This is being addressed and the recent introduction of focused support has led to a higher proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching the level expected of them.
- The proportion of Year 6 pupils making the progress expected of them in reading, writing and

mathematics has been above average for two years. Last year, the proportion exceeding the expected progress was above average in writing and mathematics and average in reading. Recent results show that, despite many pupils entering Key Stage 2 with below average standards, they have made good progress from their starting points.

- The school's information about pupils' achievement and work in pupils' books show that, in the majority of classrooms, pupils are making good progress. Pupil progress meetings are effective in identifying pupils in danger of falling behind. Swift action is taken to support them to catch up.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils has improved this year with a high proportion attaining the level expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics. They also made good progress and outperformed others in school in these subjects. Over time, the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and others in school and nationally has narrowed. In 2014, disadvantaged pupils were approximately eight months behind others in the school and others nationally in reading, writing. In mathematics they were 16 months behind others nationally in mathematics. Currently, disadvantaged pupils similar progress, from their starting points, as other pupils nationally.
- The most-able pupils generally make good progress from their individual starting points, but this year too few of the most-able pupils in Year 6 reached the higher Level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics. This was because in some classrooms, the pace of learning has not been fast enough and pupils have not always been provided with extra challenge soon enough to accelerate their progress. The school is taking action by introducing smaller teaching groups to tailor teaching more accurately to meet the most-able-pupils' needs. Additionally, leaders now make good use of a higher-level teaching assistant to target the most-able pupils with gaps in their learning.
- The school's provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good and most of these pupils make good progress, some from significantly below typical starting points. There are a number of pupils with behavioural, emotional and social needs, and others with complex special educational needs, which have an impact on their ability to learn or to follow routines within the school. The school makes good use of additional services and values their advice and support. The school community thoughtfully and sensitively supports the inclusion of these pupils.

The early years provision is good

- The achievement of children in the early years is good. About half the children enter the Nursery class with skills below those typical for their age, especially in reading, writing and number. They make good progress and by the time they leave the Reception class most are ready for learning in Year 1.
- Although most children enter the school in the Nursery, a number of new children are admitted into the Reception Year. Just over half of these children have skills typical for their age in most areas of learning. Overall, children including those who are disadvantaged make good progress during their time in the Reception class. By the time they enter Year 1, an above average proportion have reached a good level of development.
- The learning environment, both inside and outside, has improved. It is an attractive place to play and learn. There are many well-organised opportunities for children to develop their physical skills and to be creative, and there is a wide range of activities from which children can choose. Sometimes staff do not check that children make full use of all of the learning experiences on offer, especially opportunities for the boys to practise their writing. This means that boys' writing is not as well developed as that of girls.
- Leadership and management of the early years is good because the leader has a good level of expertise and knows the strengths and the areas for further development. She encourages staff across both the Nursery and Reception classes to work and plan together. She has a good understanding of children's progress and meets with staff regularly to plan improvements.
- Teaching is good and has a positive impact on children's learning from the moment they enter the early years. Teachers enrich the curriculum through visits, such as to a local farm, and through visitors, such as a police officer. From a young age, children learn about different cultures and religions, including Islam and Christianity.
- Teachers make effective use of a 'sound' and 'word' wall to track children's progress and encourage them to talk about their learning and to apply their newly acquired phonic skills in their writing. For example, the story about *The Little Red Hen* promoted much conversation between the children while others wrote the ingredients for baking and joined in practical activities, such as making bread. Children also enjoyed writing an invitation to a tea party.
- Teachers effectively use accurate information about children's learning to make sure that individual children make good progress. Home/school information and homework books are sent home regularly.

Parents and children contribute to progress records known as learning journals. However, sometimes the next steps in learning are not always clearly recorded, which makes it more difficult for staff to tailor new learning more precisely.

- All adults encourage children to develop routines, to work together and to take responsibility. Children behave well and show respect towards each other. They quickly develop a curiosity in learning and play together successfully. Teachers work successfully to include disabled children and those who have special educational needs. They sensitively and effectively support pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- The early years is a safe place to learn because everyone is vigilant in ensuring safeguarding is treated as a priority. Staff work closely together to ensure the safety of each child. Parents trust the school and feel that their children are kept safe.

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

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| Unique reference number | 107732 |
| Local authority | Kirklees |
| Inspection number | 462250 |

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

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| 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 | 332 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Patrick Mungovin |
| Headteacher | Nicola Grant |
| Date of previous school inspection | 3 July 2013 |
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