

St Mary Magdalene Church of England Primary School

Rowington Crescent, Warwick Estate, London, W2 5TF

Inspection dates 16–17 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher has very high expectations of everyone, and has built a strong team of teachers continually searching to improve.
- The headteacher's highly effective leadership along with the assistant headteacher is the key to the school's recent improvements. Governors support the school well.
- Teaching in Years 4 to 6 is of a very high quality and outstanding at times. This accounts for the pupils' rapid progress in these classes.
- Pupils feel safe, behave well, and really enjoy learning.
- The pupils' progress in writing and mathematics and the quality of their work have risen sharply through the determined effort by leaders to improve teaching.
- The school's teaching of exciting subjects is a significant factor in the pupils' learning, enjoyment of school and rising attainment particularly in writing.
- Pupils have a very clear picture of how well they are doing. Teachers' marking of their work identifies how well they have done and tells them how it can be improved.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some subject leaders do not know enough about how well pupils are doing in their subjects and are not doing enough to bring about improvements.
- Less effective teaching in Years 1 to 3 accounts for the pupils' somewhat slower progress at times, particularly in reading and for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, of which four were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, they made a number of other short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, parents and carers, several members of the governing body including the Chair, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the six responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and held informal discussions with parents and carers at the start of the school day. They also took into consideration the survey of parents, carers and pupils undertaken by the school last term.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including the school's own data on the pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Martin Beale, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Susan Reid

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds and the majority speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils receiving additional funding through the pupil premium is well above average.
- More pupils than in other schools join or leave part-way through their primary school education.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in Years 1 to 3 so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - increasing the teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - making sure pupils think for themselves
 - planning ways to develop pupils' fluency and understanding in reading
 - ensuring that teachers set work at the right level for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Improve the effectiveness of subject leadership by:
 - providing training so that leaders have the skills to check and improve teaching in their areas of responsibility
 - ensuring that plans for improvement in their areas are acted upon more urgently and their impact monitored.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- By the time they leave Year 6, pupils are reaching average standards in both English and mathematics. This is an improvement on recent years because better teaching is leading to pupils making good progress. Teachers are helping pupils to catch up quickly and fill gaps in their knowledge and understanding.
- Children enter the Nursery with skills and understanding well below those typical for their age. Improvements to teaching here and in Reception mean that children are now making faster progress and an increasing number are reaching levels expected for the start of Year 1.
- Pupils now use number skills with much greater accuracy and confidently tackle mathematical problems and investigations. Their writing is linked closely to topics and other subjects, stimulated further by the books they are reading as a class. By completing all writing in the same book, pupils are continually reminded of their targets and their teacher's expectations. Classroom displays are also used very effectively to provide models of quality writing to which the pupils can aspire.
- Improving reading has been identified as a priority by the headteacher. Phonics skills (linking letters and sounds) are taught well in Reception and Key Stage 1 so that pupils tackle unfamiliar words confidently. However, not enough attention is paid in Years 1 and 2 to developing their fluency when reading and other skills such as comprehension. Consequently, attainment in reading is below average by the end of Year 2.
- The progress of pupils supported by additional funding from the government (pupil premium) has risen and is more rapid than seen in other schools nationally. The extra staffing for mathematics and individual support for specific pupils in reading and writing has led to these pupils catching others up quickly.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make adequate progress in Key Stage 1 but good progress thereafter because work is set at the right level for them. Pupils enter the school at other times than the start of term quickly catch up to the levels of others in their classes. Many newly arrived pupils enter speaking limited English as do those who start in the Nursery. By providing a rich speaking and listening opportunities they develop English language quickly and once fluent their progress in other subjects speeds up.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The most effective teaching as seen in Years 4 to 6 is lively and enthusiastic so that it gains and retains pupils' interest and quickly moves learning forward. Teachers check progress and adapt their teaching in the light of pupils' responses, regularly getting pupils to explain their ideas to others. Pupils rise to the challenge of testing their ideas on whiteboards and are encouraged to learn by their mistakes. Activities are pitched at just the right level to make them think hard.
- Teachers in the Nursery and Reception classes provide a wide range of interesting activities both indoors and outside. They check children's learning regularly to ensure they develop all areas of their learning, although opportunities to extend the more able are sometimes missed.
- When teachers' expectations are not high enough, learning slows. In these lessons teachers tell pupils what to do rather than getting them to think for themselves, and limit what pupils can achieve because activities are not hard enough.
- Teachers use 'group reading' sessions to develop the pupils' wider reading skills. These are less effective in Years 1 and 2. Groups working closely with the teacher or another adult are led well, but other activities that pupils tackle by themselves can occasionally be too simple and interest is rapidly lost. Furthermore, reading corners in these classrooms are not as well organised and do not encourage pupils to read widely and develop a love of books.
- Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is variable and less effective in Years 1 and 2. These pupils make good progress when taken out of classes by support staff to work individually

or in small groups. Teachers in Years 4 to 6 take more careful account of the specific needs of these pupils in their lessons but this good practice is not shared across the school. Progress slows when work is not matched to pupils' targets.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour in lessons and around the school has improved because the headteacher ensures the policies and procedures are carried out consistently. By making her expectations clear to families and taking a firm line on term-time holidays she has succeeded in raising attendance levels and punctuality at the start of the day. She is supported well in this drive by the Family Support Worker. A Breakfast Club not only provides a good start to the day for those attending but also helps pupils to come to school regularly and on time.
- Pupils try hard in lessons, answer questions enthusiastically, offer their ideas and learn from each other when discussing questions or working together. They take great care at the start of each day to respond to their teacher's marking, by correcting their work or adding more to it. No lessons are disrupted by inappropriate behaviour, although at times a few pupils lose concentration when work does not stimulate their imagination.
- Pupils support each other well such as when explaining what they like about a partner's work and how they could make it even better. They also go out of their way to help newcomers to the school settle in and make new friends.
- Pupils say they feel safe at all times in school and know where to go to for help if needed. 'Keeping Myself Safe Week' teaches pupils about safety concerns including e-safety and what to do in an unsafe situation. Teachers help pupils to understand what bullying is in all of its forms. Cases of bullying are very rare and dealt with swiftly.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's relentless determination to drive up standards is shared by staff, because she consistently makes clear to everyone her high ambitions for the school. She quickly puts in place targets and training for staff when improvement in teaching is needed and continually checks to see if these targets are being met. She does not allow salary progression unless staff are successful in enabling pupils to make good or better progress. This has led to a rapid improvement in mathematics over the last year under highly skilled subject leadership. The leader's coaching of teachers and model of excellent practice for them to follow has given them much greater confidence.
- Not all leaders have the same impact. Plans are in place to improve reading but these are not being pushed forward quickly enough and their impact checked. Similarly, the learning and progress of pupils with special educational needs is not checked carefully to identify what action is needed by teachers to improve progress in Years 1 to 3.
- Pupil premium funding is used thoughtfully to make sure that individual pupils get the support they need to catch up if they have fallen behind others. To support the drive to improve mathematics, additional staffing was brought in, resources purchased and training provided for their use. This significantly improved these pupils' accuracy and confidence when calculating. Funding is now being used to staff individual help for pupils in reading and writing and to buy additional resources for letters and sounds.
- Pupils greatly enjoy topics which cleverly link learning between subjects and include exciting visits. For example, Year 3 pupils walked round their local area and then prepared a newspaper article on materials they had seen and linked this with their science work. Staff work hard to ensure pupils take a full part in all activities and that there is no discrimination.
- Philosophy lessons reflect the school's determination to extend pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These lessons deepen pupils' thinking and understanding, and provide opportunities to discuss interesting moral issues. Year 4 pupils thoughtfully explored issues such as 'Why do people have fears?' and 'Why is caring for each other so important?'

- The local authority has taken a light touch approach to the school over the last year having given much support earlier to help the headteacher identify how to improve mathematics. There has been much closer involvement with the diocesan board in providing training for teachers, self-evaluation and planning for improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is increasing in its effectiveness; governors help to identify priorities for improvement and check rigorously that targets set are being met. Governors know how well teachers are doing but are not always clear how salary progression is linked to them meeting targets for pupils' achievement. The Chair of the Governing body keeps fully up to date with how well pupils are doing through senior team meetings and weekly classroom visits. Individual governors are extending their understanding of school information, expertise and questioning skills by linking closely with staff, and visiting each year for 'Governors Day'; the governing body ensures that statutory duties are met and that financial resources, including the pupil premium, are managed effectively.

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	101135
Local authority	Westminster
Inspection number	400456

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	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Terry O'Brien
Headteacher	Tonnie Simpson
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 January 2010
Telephone number	020 7641 4388
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