

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School

Crescent Lane, Clapham, London, SW4 9QJ

Inspection dates

20–21 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- All leaders, staff and governors work successfully in a highly cohesive way to ensure that pupils' achievement, behaviour and the quality of teaching continue to be outstanding.
- Pupils make exceptional progress in all subjects right from the time they join the school. As a result, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.
- The early years provision is outstanding. Children are happy and get an excellent start in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils have a real thirst for learning and a strong desire to do well. They love coming to school. This is reflected in their above average attendance.
- Pupils say they feel very safe. They have a deep understanding of how to keep themselves safe beyond the school environment.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly effective. They learn about a range of cultures and religions and show high levels of respect.
- Teaching is outstanding. All teachers and teaching assistants know all their pupils exceptionally well. Pupils say they make learning fun.
- Pupils benefit from an exciting and interesting range of subjects and activities. This supports their outstanding achievement.
- The governing body knows the school exceedingly well. Its actions have been highly successful in maintaining the outstanding quality of this school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 22 lessons and also observed pupils being taught in small groups. Three sessions were jointly observed with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at a range of pupils' work.
- Discussions were held with staff, groups of pupils and three members of the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of very detailed information including: the school's evaluation of its own performance; data about pupils' progress; minutes of the governing body meetings; and documents relating to child protection, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of 54 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and all written correspondence from parents. Inspectors also took into consideration 37 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Sharona Semlali, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Teresa Davies	Additional Inspector
Angela Podmore	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized school.
- At the time of the inspection, the deputy headteacher was on secondment. There were three acting assistant headteachers.
- The early years provision consists of a part-time morning and afternoon Nursery and two full-time Reception classes.
- The school is a member of the Lambeth Catholic Schools Partnership, a local network of schools.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding to support those eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority) is broadly average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school has achieved the following awards: Investors in People 2014, The Basic Skills Quality Mark 2014 and The Lambeth Healthy Schools Award 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers make the best possible use of teaching assistants when they are addressing the whole class.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

are outstanding

- The headteacher is relentless and determined that all pupils in the school must achieve the best that they are capable of. She has the full support of very dedicated assistant heads, staff and governors. All of them are striving towards the same goal. Together, they have successfully created a nurturing and caring school where pupils prosper.
- Senior leaders and those in charge of subjects make meticulous checks to the quality of teaching. Subject leaders are highly effective in securing improvements in their areas of responsibility.
- All leaders analyse and make full use of the detailed information that they have on pupils' achievements. This is used to great effect to give an accurate, concise and clear picture of the school's performance. It helps leaders to make sure that no pupil is allowed to slip through the net and underachieve. This shows the school's high level of commitment to promoting equality of opportunity for all of its pupils.
- All teachers and support staff have challenging targets which are clearly linked to their performance. All staff work extremely hard and are never complacent with their practice. Newly qualified teachers are well supported. All teachers are given ample opportunities to see good and outstanding practice in other schools. They attend regular and relevant training. As a result, the quality of teaching continues to be outstanding.
- The pupil premium funding is used exceptionally well to narrow the gaps in achievement between the disadvantaged pupils and others in the school and nationally. This includes providing specialist support such as health mentors and therapists who give personalised support for individuals.
- The school does not tolerate any form of discrimination.
- The school's exciting new range of subjects and activities is fully in place. The school has developed its own approach to assessing how much progress pupils are making in all subjects. The curriculum is highly effective in promoting pupils' love of learning. Pupils study local landmarks, and a range of trips helps to enhance their experience beyond the school environment. The curriculum ensures pupils have an in-depth knowledge of life in modern Britain. It prepares them exceptionally well for the next stage in their education.
- The school's work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly effective. For example, pupils sing in the different languages of the cultures represented within the school, such as Spanish and Portuguese. They celebrate and respect the diverse cultures within and beyond the school, reflecting the school's excellent promotion of British values. The school choirs take part in a variety of local and national events and competitions.
- The school's use of the primary sports funding is having a highly positive impact on its pupils. More pupils are participating and being successful in a range of competitions, particularly disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Senior leaders effectively foster strong relationships between the different schools within the local network. This helps teachers to share and give their expertise in order to drive improvements within their schools.
- Parents have high regard for the school's work. Almost all of the parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire would recommend the school to another parent.
- The local authority provides very good quality formal and informal support to the school. For example, it has helped them with recent changes in staff and has undertaken a review of teaching and learning.
- All safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is led by a highly knowledgeable Chair. Members of the governing body spend time in the school getting to know its pupils. Governors are fully committed to ensuring that all its members and staff in the school receive high quality training. They have undertaken a review of themselves. This has enabled them to make exceptional use of their skills and expertise when they allocate themselves to a particular committee. Governors are actively involved in the strategic direction of the school and in assessing the quality of the school's work. They stringently hold themselves and all leaders to account about the school's performance.
 - Governors are well informed about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching throughout the school. This is because they use a range of data. They commission external reviews on the school so that they are not solely reliant on the information provided by leaders.
 - Governors have an in-depth understanding of the school's system to reward good teaching and tackle any weaknesses.

- Governors meticulously monitor the school's finances, particularly the spending of sports and pupil premium funding, and have a deep understanding as to how this is positively impacting on pupils' personal and academic achievement.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils have highly positive attitudes and a real thirst for learning. They have an extremely strong desire to do well. This is particularly evident in the way they respond to and act on the teachers' marking. They absolutely love coming to school and this is reflected in their above average attendance.
- Pupils show high levels of respect to all adults and to each other. They sensibly move around the school in a calm, orderly manner. During lunch and break times, there is an extremely strong sense of social cohesion between the different year groups. Older pupils always look out for the younger ones. All of them take great pride in wearing their uniforms and look after the school environment.
- Pupils take their responsibilities very seriously. They care deeply for others and make an excellent contribution to the wider community. This is seen through their wealth of support they give to a wide range of charities. In the playground, those who are 'sports buddies' seek out and play with those pupils who are feeling sad. The process of pupils electing their school council representatives helps them to develop an understanding of democracy.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel safe. They fully understand what is meant by bullying and are adamant that this is not a problem. The school's documentation shows that there are very few incidences of pupils misbehaving.
- Pupils are securely informed as to how they can keep themselves safe beyond the school environment. They have a well-developed knowledge on how to keep safe when using the internet. Pupils in Year 6 have made a useful video on this topic for others.
- The school's documents on safety, such as risk assessments, are extremely rigorous and robust. All staff are up to date with their safeguarding training. School leaders always make sure that their health and safety procedures are checked externally as pupils' safety is given a high priority.
- All parents, staff and pupils feel that the school does its utmost to keep pupils safe and the inspection findings supports this view.

The quality of teaching**is outstanding**

- Teaching over time is outstanding. The headteacher and governors ensure that all staff access the necessary support and training so that their practice is always of a high standard.
- Mathematics is exceptionally well taught. Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent. They ensure that pupils have an in-depth understanding of the basic skills, such as division and subtraction. Pupils say they find learning their times tables fun, particularly when they do this through singing, as was seen during a Year 2 and a 3 lesson. Teachers are highly effective at making mathematics meaningful and relating it to real-life events. They make sure that pupils practise their mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, pupils went to Clapham Common with their trundle wheel to understand what a kilometre looks like.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils. This is evident in the high quality and quantity of work that is beautifully presented in all of their books in the different subjects. Pupils take great pride in all of their work. Teachers give them sufficient time to practise their writing skills at length, in subjects other than in English. All of this is helping them to become very mature writers by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.
- Teachers' marking in all subjects quickly helps pupils to move their learning on. It gives clear guidance on the next steps needed to improve their work. This is acted on by pupils.
- Teachers' excellent use of questioning extends and challenges the thinking skills of all groups of pupils. Teachers give pupils enough time to discuss and share their ideas. For example, in a Year 6 science lesson, pupils were highly engaged in discussing their predictions and recording methods of what would happen to different solids when added to water.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work exceptionally well together to support pupils' learning. However, there are a few times when teachers do not always make the best use of teaching assistants to support

pupils' learning when they are addressing the whole class.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils make exceptional progress in all subjects, particularly in writing and mathematics. Standards are typically above average. In 2014, the data, particularly in reading, was skewed by the slightly lower attainment of a small group of pupils who had severe complex learning needs. Nevertheless, this reflected the excellent progress made by this group of pupils.
- All staff who teach phonics (the sounds that letters make) to those who are at the early stages of reading are highly skilled. Consequently, the results from the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2014 were well above the national average.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve extremely well in all subjects. Those who have English as an additional language, particularly those who are at the early stages of learning to speak English, make exceptional progress in all subjects by the time they leave the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress from their starting points, which are often very low. This is because school leaders quickly identify their complex learning needs. They closely check pupils' progress and use the data carefully to establish the specific type of help needed. The school's excellent use of its links with a range of external agencies, together with specialist staff within the school, help to give these pupils the personalised support that they need.
- The most able pupils make excellent progress because the school strongly encourages them to tackle challenging and demanding work. Excellent provision is in place for them. For example, selected pupils from Year 5 have the extra challenge of studying science at a higher level in a secondary school. In the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2014, the proportion of pupils who achieved the highest level (Level 6) in mathematics was well above average. It was above average in the spelling, punctuation and grammar tests.
- Even though some of the disadvantaged pupils also have English as an additional language or have special educational needs, they still make rapid progress from their starting points. Despite some of these pupils facing extremely challenging circumstances, the gap between them and their classmates, and other pupils nationally, is closing quickly.
- In the 2014 national tests, in reading, the disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 were half a term behind the others in the school and just over a term behind pupils nationally. In writing, the disadvantaged pupils were just under a term behind the others in the school and one term behind others nationally. In mathematics, the disadvantaged pupils were just over half a term behind the others in the school and others nationally. Elsewhere in the school, disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium make rapid progress because the school uses the funding exceptionally well.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- The leadership and management of the early years provision are outstanding. The tracking and monitoring of the quality of teaching and children's progress are extremely robust. Leaders make sure that the assessment data are moderated by other early years staff in the local authority so that they are accurate.
- Children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities that are generally below those typical for their age. Their skills are often particularly weak in communication and language. This is because a significant proportion of children start school with a limited understanding of English. By the time they leave the early years provision, they make outstanding progress and enter into Year 1 as confident learners.
- Teaching is outstanding. Staff make sure that the indoor and outdoor learning areas provide rich, varied and imaginative experiences for all children. Labels such as the names of fruit are effectively displayed in the different languages. This helps to place a high value on children's home languages. The school's data show that girls' achievement is slightly higher than that of boys. Teachers have effectively used this information to adapt some of their topics and the use of the outdoor area to appeal more to boys. As a result of this, work in children's 'learning journey' records shows that boys are now making more rapid progress.
- Teachers ensure that there is a sharp focus in helping children to develop their communication and language skills. For example, during the time of the inspection, adults positively reinforced the language of heaviest, lightest, full and empty. The children had so much fun doing this that they kept sharing this with others throughout the day.
- Highly effective communication links are made with parents. This is done through the regular newsletters

and organised workshops that show them how to support their children.

- Children behave exceptionally well. All staff ensure that children are extremely safe and secure in all learning areas.

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	100636
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	449388

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynette Murphy O'Dwyer
Headteacher	Karen Pluckrose
Date of previous school inspection	28–29 November 2006
Telephone number	020 7622 5479
Fax number	020 7720 1569
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