

# St Mary's Priory Catholic Infant School

Hermitage Road, South Tottenham, London, N15 5RE

**Inspection dates** 25–26 September 2014

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher has built a strong team of staff, all sharing her ambitions for the school and the pupils.
- The headteacher, with governors' keen support, makes sure all staff focus on improving their teaching and the pupils' achievement. This has been the foundation for the school's continuing success.
- Teaching is consistently at least good. This enables pupils to make good progress and prepares them well for learning in the junior school.
- Children in the outstanding Nursery and Reception classes are given a very secure preparation for their learning at Key Stage 1. Links with home are strong and help the children to settle in quickly to their new surroundings.
- Children develop a good knowledge of letters and their sounds in the early years, which teachers build on very successfully at Key Stage 1.
- The school provides very strong support for all aspects of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The pupils' impeccable behaviour helps to make a happy, calm and purposeful school. The pupils show great respect and courtesy to each other and to adults.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and self-disciplined learners. They are eager to learn, listen very carefully to their teachers and respond instantly to their instructions.
- The welfare and well-being of the pupils are of the highest priority for all. Consequently, they feel safe and happy, which is a view shared by their parents.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not make as rapid progress in Years 1 and 2 and they do in the early years. This is because teaching does not consistently challenge the more- and most-able pupils in each class.
- The pupils' learning slows on occasion because time is wasted when pupils move to their tables to undertake tasks set by their teachers.
- Governors balance well support for the school with challenging it to do better. However, they are not always fully involved in helping to identify priorities for its improvement.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, two of which were seen together with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books retained by the school from the last academic year. These included records of the learning of children in the Nursery and Reception.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and a representative from the local authority.
- As there were only 10 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View, inspectors took account of the 138 responses to a recent parent questionnaire undertaken by the infant and junior schools. Inspectors also considered a further survey undertaken during the inspection with 90 responses.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: the school's own information on pupils' current progress; planning and monitoring documentation; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors also took account of the 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Martin Beale, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Martine Clark

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is average in size when compared with infant schools nationally.
- Almost all of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The majority of pupils are of Polish or Black African heritage.
- Most pupils speak English as an additional language. This includes a significant minority who enter the school at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for funding through the pupil premium is broadly average. This is additional government funding which, in this school, supports pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs on the school roll is about 14%. This is lower than that found in most schools, as is the proportion who have statements of special educational needs.
- The school has been in a federation with the junior school since 2006. The federation is led by one headteacher and a single governing body.
- The headteacher is a Local Leader of Education. In this capacity, she has been providing support for three other schools.

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

- Improve the impact of teaching on the pupils' learning and progress by ensuring that:
  - teachers consistently set work that challenges the more- and most-able pupils
  - time for learning is not wasted when pupils start work set by their teachers.
- Make sure that governors are more actively involved in establishing priorities for the school's improvement.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's very strong leadership is based on ensuring that everyone has the highest expectations of the pupils. Governors, staff and parents are fully behind her determination that her ambitions for the pupils will be met. The headteacher's determined approach is reflected in the continual drive to improve teaching and achievement and the challenging targets she sets pupils and teachers. This positive action and its continued success give the school the capacity to become even more effective.
- The headteacher maintains a strong link between good classroom performance and salary increase. Each teacher's performance is checked carefully so that targets can be set and training provided for them to improve. This process includes working alongside each other to share expertise.
- Leadership of the federation is strong, with subject leaders fulfilling their roles across both schools. The skills and expertise of subject leaders are constantly evolving through experience and targeted training. They make an effective contribution to driving improvement in their subjects and supporting their colleagues to improve learning in their classes.
- The strong partnership with the local authority has been a key factor in supporting the school's improvement. This partnership has included validating the headteacher's judgements of the school's performance and helping her check the progress of action being taken.
- Time is built into each day for spiritual reflection. Pupils are taken on regular visits to help them to understand the world around them. Extensive work is done on different international communities, with parents leading events on the food and culture of their former countries. This input has included a much-enjoyed session from a group of Ghanaian dancers. Close links with a rural school that the headteacher is supporting have helped pupils gain a perspective of different lives within modern Britain.
- The school uses sport funding well to meet its aim that pupils should eat healthily and take exercise. Year 2 pupils now benefit from swimming lessons taken by a qualified instructor. Specialist coaches provide pupils with good-quality physical education and teachers are increasing their expertise and confidence by working alongside them.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors maintain their expertise through regular training, particularly in their ability to understand assessment data on progress and attainment. They carefully check progress towards meeting priorities in the school improvement plan. Governors know what needs to be done to improve teaching and the action the headteacher and school leaders are taking for this to be achieved. They authorise how the headteacher uses systems to ensure that only good or better teaching leads to salary increases. They have kept a close eye on how the school is dealing with changes to the National Curriculum and how it prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. Governors keep a tight rein on the school's finances and check the impact of all spending decisions, including that for disadvantaged pupils and for sport and physical education. They check that arrangements for safeguarding are in order. However, they are not always fully involved in sharing with school leaders the identification of priorities for improvement.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils mix confidently and treat each other with kindness and great consideration. They include new pupils as a matter of course, so that it is almost impossible to distinguish between new arrivals and others. Their behaviour in lessons, around the school and at lunchtime is impeccable. Any slight rare misdemeanour is dealt with constructively through reconciliation.
- Pupils are very keen to learn, be successful and please their teachers. They very diligently tackle the tasks they are given and take great pride in keeping their work as neat as they can. Pupils support each other very constructively when sharing ideas in discussion or working on activities together.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Governors and staff are very vigilant in ensuring that the site is safe at all times and all safeguarding procedures are rigorously implemented. When questioned, pupils say they enjoy school and have many good friends. Bullying simply does not happen as far as they and their parents are concerned. This is confirmed by school records.
- Pupils raise funds for a wide range of charities and through this have gained a very sharp understanding and tolerance of illnesses such as Down's Syndrome and heart disease.
- Attendance is above average because of the school's firm action to discourage families taking holidays

during the school term.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- Teaching is leading to pupils learning well and making good progress over time. Teachers make clear they expect pupils will strive to do their best. Pupils respond to their teachers' high expectations of their behaviour so that classrooms are calm and there is a hard working atmosphere throughout the school.
- The assessment of pupils' progress and attainment is generally accurate and used effectively when planning learning in lessons. Progress over time is checked carefully so that teachers can keep an eye on the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. This enables them to spot quickly any pupil falling behind their targets and put in further support.
- Teachers and support staff assist well the language development of all pupils, but particularly those new to learning to speak English. From the early years onwards they provide clear models of spoken English and expect pupils to respond in whole sentences. The meaning of new vocabulary is carefully explained and put into context to extend the pupils' understanding.
- The strong team of support staff makes a significant contribution to the pupils' learning, particularly disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They are thoughtfully deployed by teachers and work closely in tandem with them to implement support programmes effectively. Teachers are also fully aware of the disadvantaged pupils in their classes and take careful account of their specific learning and personal needs.
- The more- and most-able pupils are not always made to think deeply enough. At times, the work given is similar to that for others pupils in the class – even when the most able have clearly mastered it. Some of these pupils say that they find the work too easy.
- The time it takes some pupils to write out learning intentions for the lesson eats into the time left for the tasks they are to undertake and slows their progress.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Pupils' attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 2. This represents good progress from skills much lower than expected for their age on entry to the school. Polish and Black African pupils achieve equally as well as others. Results of Year 2 assessments have been broadly average for the last five years. They have risen in writing more rapidly than improvements seen nationally over this period.
- Progress for the most-able pupils varies between classes and between subjects. This is because they are not consistently well challenged by the work they are given. As a result, fewer pupils reach higher levels in each subject than seen nationally.
- Pupils make rapid progress in phonics (sounds that letters make). Results of the screening check for Year 1 pupils have been at least above average and rose significantly in 2014. Pupils enjoy reading and readily use their skills to help them when faced with unfamiliar words.
- Improving the pupils' handwriting has been a school priority in recent years. The majority of pupils now write in a neatly joined style by the end of Year 2. Their writing engages the reader. Many use ambitious vocabulary and make very plausible attempts at spelling tricky words.
- Pupils new to English also make good progress because all adults focus sharply on their language needs. Their attainment generally matches that of others by the end of Year 2.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similarly good progress to that of others. This is because the early identification of their specific needs enables the school to apply carefully planned and effective support programmes.
- The narrow gap between the attainment of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium and others in the year group and nationally widened in 2013, but narrowed again to a negligible amount in 2014. This improvement was because the school used the pupil premium well to promote pupils' good progress through small-group literacy and numeracy support.

### **The early years provision** is outstanding

- Children make rapid progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. Many more are at or above levels expected for their age by the end of Reception than when they enter the school.
- Children settle very quickly into the routines of each class. Many were observed at an early stage of the year choosing activities, selecting resources and working together confidently and without fuss. They are

inspired by well-resourced and stimulating activities in both classes. They become quickly engrossed in their work and play. For example, Reception children were seen to take great enjoyment listening to and acting out the story of *The Three Little Pigs*.

- The assessment of each child's learning is rigorous and accurate. Adults check the children's progress regularly. This scrutiny enables them to focus their teaching and the activities they set out to move children's learning forward rapidly.
- The very strong partnership with home is a major strength in supporting the children's learning. Each child's 'Special Book' can go home each evening so parents can see the journey their children's learning is taking and add their own comments about achievements out of school.
- Strong leadership of the early years team has led to considerable improvements in provision and the children's achievement since the previous inspection. Expertise is shared so that all staff are able to develop rapidly the children's language and speaking. The classes are also used as examples of high-quality practice for visiting staff from other local schools to observe.

## 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>	102147
<b>Local authority</b>	Haringey
<b>Inspection number</b>	448179

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	230
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Marva Hibbert
<b>Headteacher</b>	Florence Collins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8800 9305
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