

St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School

Ardwell Lane, Greenleys, Milton Keynes, MK12 6AY

Inspection dates 15–16 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make outstanding progress from their below-average starting points. Pupils achieve high standards by the end of Year 6.
- Outstanding teaching and attention to each child's individual needs mean that all pupils make rapid progress and are excited about their learning.
- Pupils know how to improve their work because staff mark their work thoroughly and make clear the next steps they need to take to move their learning on.
- Exciting experiences and visits across all subjects lead to a high level of interest and high standards across the curriculum and this is reflected in the vibrant learning environment and excellent standards of work in books. It also supports the high level of attendance.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes make an outstanding contribution to their learning and to the success of the school. Within the calm and purposeful atmosphere, there is a passion for learning from both staff and pupils. The pupils are a delight to be with and show respect to all members of the school community. They say that they feel safe in school and know how to stay safe outside school.
- The headteacher's passion and drive to achieve the best for every pupil are shared by other leaders, staff and governors. This has meant that achievement has continued to improve for all pupils.
- Governors are very knowledgeable. They support and challenge leaders through their close involvement with school life and this has been a key factor in the school's continued improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes and visited 24 lessons. The headteacher and deputy headteacher joined in six of the observations.
- Discussions were held with pupils, parents, the headteacher and other leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 61 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Questionnaires from 41 members of staff were received and their views taken into account.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, spoke with them about their learning, and looked at work in books.
- Inspectors checked the school’s self-evaluation, improvement plan, current results and progress, minutes of governor meetings, records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Lynne Bradbury, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Matthew Klimcke

Additional Inspector

Lynne Thorogood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school has pupils from many cultural backgrounds. The largest group are from White British backgrounds.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium funding, which provides funding for looked after children and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress
- The school has achieved many awards recognising its excellence, including the International Schools Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the newly developed marking policy across all subject areas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are much lower than those expected for this age group. Children make good progress and enter Year 1 with skills which are closer to those expected for their age.
- In the check of phonics (letters and sounds) in Year 1, the percentage of pupils from all groups who attain high standards is well above that nationally. During the phonics lessons observed during the inspection, all pupils made good or better progress.
- By the end of Year 2, pupils across all groups reach standards which are above expectations.
- By the end of Year 6 all groups of pupils have made outstanding progress, with many pupils reaching standards well above those found nationally.
- Tracking data for pupils currently in school show that these pupils are on track to continue this trend of achievement, with more pupils likely to achieve at the very highest levels.
- Consistently high quality teaching (seen in lessons and in books representing progress for last year and the current term) means that pupils make outstanding progress across the range of subjects.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress to reach standards well above others in this group nationally. This is because of the targeted support they receive in lessons and the individual support outside lessons.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding make outstanding progress in line with their peers and sometimes beyond them. The funding means that these pupils have extra small group and one-to-one support, access to school visits and clubs.
- Visits and visitors make an excellent contribution to progress, providing real-life experiences and creating excitement in learning.
- The relentless focus on reading, both within school and for homework, means that pupils make rapid progress in this area. Those from all ability and year groups, who read to inspectors, read fluently, with expression, taking account of punctuation and meaning, and showed high levels of understanding of what they had read. They talked with great enthusiasm about their favourite authors and the books they had read.
- Key skills in English and mathematics are developed well in all subjects.
- The school nurture group gives excellent provision to those in need of this extra support. It also offers support to pupils from other schools.
- The extra funding for physical education has been used to support high quality coaching which is also giving staff the opportunity to develop their own skills.
- The range and high number of opportunities to extend learning beyond the school day are greatly appreciated by pupils and parents.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is consistently good, and a high proportion is outstanding. Teachers use their excellent knowledge of what pupils have already learned to plan the next stages of learning for all ability groups. They use exciting topics and learning experiences to make sure that pupils know their targets, want to learn and join in enthusiastically. For example, in a Year 6 writing lesson, a teaching assistant disguised as a masked raider burst into the room and held up the teacher. The pupils' desire to write burst into action.
- Most parents express the view that their children are taught well and make excellent progress.
- The learning environment in all year groups is used exceptionally well so that all pupils can make the maximum progress in their learning. In the Early Years Foundation Stage the indoor and outdoor environment gives opportunities for children to develop all aspects of their learning through highly creative and imaginative activities that they choose themselves and those

directed by staff who are highly skilled in asking high level questions.

- All staff have high expectations of every aspect of pupils' learning. Relationships at all levels are highly respectful and based upon staff's secure knowledge of every pupil, and this contributes well to the way in which pupils learn.
- Teachers' commitment to marking and feedback on pupils' learning means that all pupils know how to improve their work, and their books show that this is very successful in helping them to make excellent progress. The new version of the marking policy is even more focused on the next steps in achieving targets. This has not yet been developed across all subjects.
- Teaching assistants, mentors, coaches and volunteers make an excellent contribution to pupils' progress, behaviour and enthusiasm. The outstanding progress of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those entitled to pupil premium funding, owes a great deal to the interventions from these members of staff as well as expert teaching and assessment.
- Every space is used to ensure that learning is excellent for all pupils. Classrooms, corridors and the outdoor spaces give lots of support for learning as well as celebrating the exciting topics and high level values in the school. Imaginative structures, physical challenges and areas for reflection in the grounds add to the interest and variety for pupils of all ages.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The exemplary attitudes and behaviour of the vast majority of pupils make an outstanding contribution to their learning and development. They are very proud of their school and talk with great enthusiasm about all aspects of their learning and school life.
- Relationships in school show the impact of the highly-prized school values, encouraging the highest possible standards. These are exemplified by all members of staff and by pupils as they progress through the school.
- Older pupils are proud to take responsibility for tasks in school in order to support younger pupils. Throughout the school there is a warmth and high level of trust among all groups.
- Behaviour is consistently outstanding around the school and within lessons. Staff have high expectations of all pupils and have set clear routines and use praise generously so that pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils are polite, respectful and courteous to each other and to visitors, and are keen to share their learning.
- An example of outstanding behaviour was seen when pupils were asked to work in groups to create sequences of movements in a physical education lesson and to record these on hand-held tablets in order to assess their own work. They were sensible, ambitious and extremely critical of themselves and each other in order to improve their work. In spite of the obvious enthusiasm and exuberance of the pupils, their behaviour and support for each other were exceptional.
- Views expressed by staff, parents and pupils show great pride in the activities and achievements of the school, and agree that pupils feel safe. Pupils say that bullying is rare, is dealt with very quickly if it occurs, and that they know who to approach if they have any concerns.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and understand the dangers of new technologies like the internet.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View said that they would recommend the school to others.
- Attendance is consistently above average and effective systems are in place to support any pupil who falls below this standard. Rates of progress for each class are displayed on their entrances, and pupils and parents have entered into a spirit of friendly competition to ensure that their class is the best.
- Pupils greatly enjoy, and are highly motivated by, the exciting range of clubs offered outside the school day.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school's values drive every aspect of its work and the headteacher embodies these values in her determination that every pupil should achieve the very best and that every member of staff should have the best possible development. This ambition is shared by governors and all staff and is evident in every aspect of the school's work, thus ensuring that there is equality of opportunity for all and no discrimination.
 - Staff share a great pride in the school and feel highly valued. Every questionnaire returned by staff confirmed the high quality of the work of the school.
 - Newly qualified teachers have an excellent induction programme which means that they rapidly reach the standards of teaching expected from all members of staff. A highly developed programme of development, appropriate to each member of staff, is developed each year so that every member of staff is supported to deliver outstanding pupil progress.
 - Each teacher's work is measured in terms of the progress made by pupils, and the training offered addresses any area highlighted in progress tracking. Targets are set for teachers linked to the progress made by pupils, and more is expected from those teachers paid on the upper pay scale.
 - Rigorous monitoring of all aspects of the school means that senior leaders know which areas need to be developed further, and these are addressed as priorities.
 - The curriculum is rich, exciting and relevant to pupils' lives. Visits help to bring subjects to life, and pupils have many opportunities to develop specific skills in music, art and physical education.
 - The local authority has high regard for the work of this school and provides light touch support.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors understand the performance of the school, appreciate its successes and are clear about its future development. They undertake a great deal of high quality training which means that they can conduct their roles to a very high standard. They are closely involved with school life and make regular visits to lessons. They understand the data and tracking systems in school and use all of this information to evaluate success. They ask important questions and hold leaders accountable for their work. They measure success against pupil achievement and use this to manage the performance of staff and to set staff pay. They manage the financial resources of the school well and check the impact upon achievement, so that improvements can be planned appropriately, including the use of the pupil premium and the extra funding for physical education. They fulfil their statutory duties, for example in finance and safeguarding.
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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	110483
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	426580

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	371
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ciaran Forken
Headteacher	Rosemarie Jones
Date of previous school inspection	September 2008
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