

The Oratory Roman Catholic Primary School

Oliver Road, Ladywood, Birmingham, B16 9ER

Inspection dates

27–28 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Good teaching enables all pupils, including those who need extra help, to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress.
- Pupils currently at the school are doing well. The work pupils produce in lessons and in their books show that standards are improving, particularly so in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers create a positive atmosphere for learning in classrooms. They plan interesting tasks to help pupils learn well.
- Pupils are happy at school. They say they feel safe and adults take good care of them.
- Around the school and in lessons, pupils behave well. They have positive attitudes to learning and try their best.
- Teaching is improving. Teachers help pupils to look carefully at their own and others' work to see what they have done well and where they could improve. This helps them to make good progress.
- Leaders, managers and governors work well together to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement. Governors ensure teachers have the resources they need to promote a positive, interesting and stimulating learning environment.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in writing are lower than in reading and mathematics.
- More-able pupils do not always make the best possible progress because not all teachers set work that challenges them to think hard enough.
- Although leaders keep a careful check on how well individual pupils are doing, they do not focus closely enough on whether their actions to improve the school are leading to improvement for different groups of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 10 teachers and accompanied Year 3 pupils on a visit to The Oratory Roman Catholic Church. One lesson was jointly observed with the headteacher. Inspectors also undertook 'learning walks' which comprised a number of short visits to lessons to look at reading, including phonics (the links between letters and the sounds they make) and learning in different subjects.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, other staff and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors talked with pupils, listened to them read and observed them at play during break times and at lunchtime.
- The team reviewed the school's safeguarding policies, improvement plans, notes from meetings of the governing body and records of pupils' behaviour. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work and records of their progress.
- Inspectors took account of the 29 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were insufficient responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) to show the results. Inspectors looked at the responses to the school's most recent parental questionnaire. They also spoke to parents at the start of the school day as they brought their children to school.

Inspection team

Sarah Warboys, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kathryn Brunt

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Oratory Roman Catholic Primary School is of a similar size to most primary schools.
- The large majority of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is a little above average.
- A well-above-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. This additional government funding is based on the number of children at the school in local authority care and those who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is twice the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A breakfast club, managed by the governing body, operates on the school site.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, particularly in writing, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - build on the imaginative, stimulating experiences that inspire pupils to write
 - set hard enough work for the most-able pupils in all lessons
 - learn from the best practise that exists in the school to provide pupils with clear guidance about what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.
- Strengthen the school's leadership and management by ensuring that leaders at all levels check the effect of their actions on the achievement of different groups of pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below those expected for their age. Most make good progress to reach above-average levels by the time they enter Year 1. Adults create inviting learning opportunities that help children to try new things and encourage them to practise their skills. For example, children searched for words, or 'buried treasure', in the sandpit. They industriously set about sorting them into 'real' and 'nonsense' ones.
- Pupils are doing well in reading. The proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the required standard in phonics has been above average for the last two years. This is because young children are taught phonics regularly and systematically. Pupils continue to develop their reading skills into Key Stages 1 and 2. They work together in small groups and, guided by adults, summarise what they have read, ask questions to clarify meaning and predict what they think might happen next.
- Most pupils, including those who need extra help, are making good progress. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do well because adults use interesting resources, such as engaging computer programs, to reinforce new concepts.
- Pupils who arrive at school unable to speak English and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress. Adults use pictures and diagrams to help them learn to speak, write and practise using new words and phrases.
- The primary sports funding is being put to good use. It has provided games equipment for pupils to keep active, develop healthier lifestyles and promote their sense of well-being. As a consequence, the number of pupils who are physically active after-school and at break and lunchtimes has increased.
- The extra funding received by the school to support those eligible for the pupil premium is used effectively. It provides additional adults to work with pupils on a one-to-one basis and in small groups, in sessions known as 'target teaching'. These teaching groups help to fill specific gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. The funding is also used to organise 'family learning' to enable parents to come into school to work alongside their children.
- As a result, most pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium are making good progress, similar to their classmates. Of the Year 6 pupils who left the school in 2013, eligible pupils were, on average, about three months behind their classmates in reading and mathematics and five months behind in writing.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 have been broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics for the past three years. The Year 6 pupils who left the school in 2013 had made rapid progress, particularly in mathematics. Almost all made or exceeded the progress expected of them. Recent assessment information and the work pupils are doing in their books show that standards are rising to above average levels in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in reading and mathematics. Most pupils are on track to make or exceed expected progress, but achievement in reading and mathematics is better than in writing.
- On the whole, teachers provide work for more-able pupils at just the right level of difficulty to move their learning forward. It challenges them to think deeply. Occasionally, teachers set them work that is too easy and this slows their progress.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes share the well-organised and well-equipped Early Years Foundation Stage unit. They make good progress because adults create appealing learning opportunities that invite children to explore the world around them. Adults set up activities to provide children with plenty of opportunities to learn and practise new skills. For example, children enjoy playing games finding numbers that are 'one more' or 'one less' than another.
- Activities, such as 'feedback friends', encourage pupils to look at each other's work, point out what they have done well and what could be better. Adults teach pupils to assess how well they have learned for themselves from a very early age. As a result, they are very good at identifying what they have understood and where they need extra help and support. This helps pupils to make good progress. As a Year 6 pupil explained, 'Reading my work and having to think what I can improve helps me to realise my mistakes. It has improved my spelling, punctuation and grammar a lot.'
- Adults work well together to make sure pupils are given the extra help they need. They ask pupils questions to check their understanding and to encourage them to think. Adults readily alter their plans if pupils find the work too difficult. They provide pupils with extra resources, such as wordlists or picture clues. Such activities help pupils to extend the range of word choices they are able to use confidently and accurately.
- Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of what they teach. They give pupils clear explanations so they know precisely what is expected of them and what they have to do. Teachers plan stimulating activities for pupils that inspire them to write. As a consequence, standards in writing across the school are improving but teachers do not always build on these experiences. Consequently, attainment in writing lags behind that of reading and mathematics.
- They use computer technology well to support pupils' learning; it engages them and helps to maintain their interest. In Year 6, for example, the teachers' use of film clips provoked pupils' thinking about what an author intended by their choice of picture and words. Pupils were able to find evidence to explain their answers and subsequently, to construct their own creative and imaginative writing.
- Homework is set routinely. Pupils appreciate that it helps them to practise what they have learned in school and, in their words, 'to get better at it'.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work lets them know clearly how successful they have been. In most cases, it suggests how their work could be improved and helps to move their learning on. However, this good practice is not the case in all classes.
- Occasionally, the work set for more-able pupils is too easy for them and, as a result, they do not make rapid progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their conduct in lessons and as they move around the school shows that they are kind and considerate of others' feelings. Pupils are polite, friendly and helpful to adults and to each other. The views of parents and staff are highly positive about their behaviour and concentration in lessons and in small group work. They are smartly turned out in their uniforms and are keen and eager to learn. Most pupils take care to present their work

neatly and are proud of their achievements.

- Older pupils act as ambassadors. They explain this means that they must be good role models for younger pupils to look up to. They understand their teachers want them to do well. They say adults help them to be resilient in never giving up. As one child put it, 'This school helps us to be the best we can be.'
- Pupils say they appreciate that the staff trust them to carry out responsibilities. They say they make things happen because adults listen to their ideas. For example, they asked for picnic tables outside and for extra games equipment. Year 6 pupils now eat at the picnic tables and take turns to set out the apparatus they requested at break times. Pupils say these jobs help them to prepare for their move to secondary school. 'I'll be sad to leave', said a Year 6 ambassador, 'but we need to.'
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in all areas of the school under the care and guidance of the staff. Pupils insist that incidents of bullying are rare. They are encouraged to try to sort out minor disagreements themselves, but know how to seek help if they need to and their issues are quickly resolved. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe when using the internet and computer technology.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. As a result of close working with them and their families and of more rigorously applied policies and procedures, their attendance, below average for three years, is now above average. Levels of punctuality are good.
- Pupils enjoy attending the breakfast club. Staff promote a friendly and positive atmosphere and relationships are good. One pupil said, 'I love it! I can see my friends.' Pupils choose from a range of fun activities which, along with breakfast, provide them with a good start to the day.
- On rare occasions, a few pupils lose concentration and exhibit low-level, disruptive behaviour. This slows their learning and that of others.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders have created a positive atmosphere in which teachers can teach, pupils can learn and where they behave well. Senior leaders have empowered those with leadership responsibilities to secure improvement in key aspects of the school's work. Staff morale is high. All are firmly behind the headteacher's drive to raise pupils' achievement.
- Teachers are held responsible for the progress their pupils make. Senior leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching by watching learning in lessons, looking at pupils' work and looking at records of their progress. They set teachers targets for improvement and provide them with training to help them develop their skills.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. It ensures children get off to a good start. The school works well with outside agencies to make sure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs get the extra help they need.
- The responses of parents to the school's most recent questionnaire, and those who spoke with inspectors, were all positive. They are happy with the care and support their children receive.
- The school is using the primary sport funding to provide specialist coaching to improve the quality of teaching in physical education. It has provided additional games equipment to ensure

more pupils are active in lessons, at break times and more attend after-school clubs. The funding has also increased pupils' opportunities to take part in competitive sport with other local schools.

- Displays celebrate the wide range of subjects the school offers its pupils, enhanced by visits, visitors and the school's own amphitheatre. Museum trips and studies of local history, supported by the school's own curator, provide interesting experiences for pupils to talk and write about. Pupils are encouraged to use their reading, writing and mathematical skills when they are learning about other subjects. They enjoy opportunities to appreciate and take part in art, drama and music. Thought-provoking 'inspire' workshops invite pupils to reflect on their own morals and values. Such activities promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Good attention is paid to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils. Discrimination of any kind is robustly tackled. Senior leaders keep a close check on how well pupils are doing. They do this on an individual level. Leaders do not measure precisely enough the effectiveness of their actions on the achievement of different groups of pupils in order to be as well informed as they could be about areas which need to improve.
- The local authority provides an appropriate level of support for the school and keeps a check on how well pupils are doing by looking at the school's published data.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors make good use of the skills they bring to the governing body. They have recently reorganised their committee structure to support the school's improvement priorities. Governors look at published data, records of pupils' progress held by the school and ask leaders important questions to hold them to account. They know pupils are making good progress and that although standards are average, they are improving. Governors seek training to help them keep up-to-date with their responsibilities but also to keep them informed of what the staff are trying to improve. Recently, they have talked with staff, pupils and parents about how useful computer technologies are in teaching and learning. They have managed the school's finances well in order provide staff and pupils with more equipment to support their views. As a result, computer technology is making a good contribution to pupils' progress. Governors make sure the pupil premium and sport funding is spent in pupils' best interests. They are aware that eligible pupils are making good progress and that the numbers of pupils taking an active part in sports events are increasing. Governors support leaders in making sure that weaknesses in teaching are tackled decisively and that only those teachers who meet the targets set for them progress along pay scales. Governors ensure safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

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	103427
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	431490

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	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Beesley
Headteacher	Clare Dickinson
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2009
Telephone number	0121 454 0600
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