

Grace Mary Primary School

Hawfield Road, Tividale, Oldbury, West Midlands B69 1LD

Inspection dates

12–13 February 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders, including governors, know their school extremely well. Their drive and determination ensure that pupils develop into successful learners and achieve their full potential.
- Leaders' passion for every pupil to have the very best care and education shines through and is at the core of all decisions made.
- Leaders have purposefully crafted a unique curriculum, which is based on the recognition of pupils' needs. It provides pupils with the skills and knowledge they need to fully develop their understanding of the world around them.
- Leaders provide wide-ranging enrichment opportunities. These are valued by pupils and contribute to pupils being well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make strong progress, including those taught in the resource base. This is because leaders provide robust, sensitive and effective leadership and teaching is highly effective
- Pupils with SEND who have autism spectrum disorders are extremely well supported within the specially resourced provision.
- A highly effective approach to the teaching of mathematics ensures that pupils' progress in mathematics is well above the national average by the end of key stage 2.
- Respectful and positive relationships between pupils and adults are a visible strength throughout the school. These set clear boundaries for excellent classroom behaviour. As a result, pupils are active and inquisitive learners.
- Children in the early years are supported well as they start their school life. They experience a wide range of learning opportunities. However, some activities are not challenging enough to meet the needs of the most able children in the Reception class.
- Teachers use a range of challenging and stimulating texts to promote both reading and writing. Consequently, pupils' progress in reading and writing are above average at the end of key stage 2.
- Teachers appreciate the excellent support and professional development they receive. They strive to be the best they can be. As a result, pupils receive very high-quality, purposeful teaching that successfully supports, challenges and extends their learning. This ensures that pupils make strong progress across the curriculum.
- Pupils develop into extremely confident and considerate individuals. They say they feel very safe at school. Pupils are given many opportunities to take on responsibilities and have a say in how things are done at school.
- Leaders' rigorous focus on improving attendance has significantly reduced absence and persistent absence. However, this continues to remain a priority.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further refine and fully embed the arrangements for monitoring attendance so that absence and persistent absence continue to reduce.
- Ensure that staff in the Reception class consistently challenge the most able children by:
 - using effective questioning to support and develop learning
 - planning activities with sufficient challenge.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders have created a passionate team of staff who are proud to be members of Grace Mary Primary School. Leaders, governors and staff share a deep understanding of the 'Grace Mary way' of teaching and learning. Staff have high expectations of pupils. Pupils understand these expectations and rise to meet them.
- Leaders do not see problems; they seek solutions. They research, discuss and develop ideas and systems that are right for the pupils in their school. Leaders' attention to detail leads to high outcomes for pupils, both personally and academically. As a result, pupils make exceptional progress and develop into confident and articulate individuals.
- Teachers benefit from high-quality professional development. Leaders model best practice, provide coaching and teach alongside staff to refine teaching skills. They respond swiftly to what their checks on teaching show. Teachers value the variety of approaches taken, the good level of support and the challenge given. Staff say: 'Senior leaders don't expect us to do anything they can't do themselves.'
- A higher than average proportion of disadvantaged pupils attend the school. Leaders analyse a range of information about their barriers to learning. They use this information to ensure that pupils get the precise support they need to thrive. Pupils experience a range of enrichment activities to help them develop socially and academically. This enables disadvantaged pupils to make excellent progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders use the primary physical education (PE) and sport premium effectively to provide pupils with a wide range of activities to improve their physical health and well-being. Pupils have opportunities to develop their fitness and to experience a variety of sports. Leaders provide workshops for families to help them to support their children's health and well-being at home.
- The school is highly inclusive. Leadership of provision for pupils with SEND, both within the specialised resource provision and the mainstream school, is very effective. Leaders and staff demonstrate passion and determination for each individual pupil to access a high-quality education. Assessments clearly identify the most appropriate provision and support for pupils with SEND. The effective use of these assessed pathways helps individuals to learn in a safe space at a pace that is right for them. Leaders monitor the use of additional support and funding closely to ensure that there is a positive impact. As a result, pupils with SEND make strong progress.
- Provision to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils and staff attach a high importance to the 'Healthy Minds, Happy Me' programme. Pupils talk about this with enthusiasm and reflect on previous learning about friendships, managing feelings, being the best they can be and how to cope when things go wrong.
- Leaders are extremely knowledgeable about individual pupils. They have a strong understanding of their starting points and any difficulties they may have. They use this information to design a stimulating curriculum that embeds basic skills and extends and deepens what pupils know and understand about the world. For example, there are

visits to a range of different places of worship. These visits help pupils to develop a thoughtful and reflective understanding of equality and diversity. Pupils develop a sense of self within their school, their community, Great Britain and the wider world. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.

- Leaders plan a wide range of trips and visitors to broaden pupils' horizons. These well-planned activities successfully extend their knowledge and life-experiences. Pupils appreciate these opportunities, especially the residential visits in Year 2 and Years 5 and 6. Leaders ensure that trips and visitors link closely with the topics that pupils are learning about. They stimulate pupils' imagination, which supports pupils' learning back in school.
- Together, the headteacher and deputy headteacher coach and mentor other leaders in the school. They ensure that their same high expectations are shared. Middle leaders drive developments in their subject areas with the same enthusiasm. Strong leadership in English and mathematics has been instrumental in driving up standards. Roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability are clearly understood by teachers and support staff.
- Subject leaders know the strengths and areas for improvement in their areas of responsibility well. Highly successful partnerships exist between leaders and they seek and make relevant links across subjects. Subject leaders ensure that pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills build progressively over time. They support teachers to plan learning in a structured and sequential way. This helps pupils to develop a deep understanding of the topics they study. The unique 'Grace Mary way' shines through pupils' learning across the curriculum.
- Leaders keep staff well-being at the forefront of their minds. Staff value the investment in their health and well-being. Staff say that leaders continually help to support a manageable workload for staff. This allows staff the time to invest in bringing learning alive to help pupils make excellent progress.

Governance of the school

- Governors recognise the difference that leaders make to the life chances of the pupils in the school. They are highly committed to sustaining the continued success of the school while remaining absolutely inclusive and ensuring that everyone is cared for and looked after.
- Governors use their individual blend of skills and experience to support and challenge leaders. They are effective in holding leaders to account about all aspects of the school's work.
- Governors scrutinise a wide range of information in a way that deepens their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They appreciate the transparency, clarity and simplicity with which information is presented. They are confident to question and challenge leaders on a range of matters. Governors are tenacious in following through a challenge until they are satisfied with the response.
- Governors particularly value the opportunity to work with teachers and subject leaders. They understand the rationale behind the development of the wider curriculum because they have worked closely with staff. Governors undertake a range of monitoring and evaluation activities, including link governor visits. This enables them to

have a first-hand understanding of the work of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established a strong safeguarding culture which ensures that everyone understands their responsibility for keeping children safe and promoting their welfare.
- Checks on staff and visitors are carried out correctly. Record-keeping by leaders and office staff is organised and all information is kept securely.
- Staff receive regular and appropriate training in safeguarding matters. As a result, they know the signs of different types of abuse and are clear about how to report any concerns they have, using the school's agreed procedures.
- Induction procedures include appropriate safeguarding training and the sharing of information. New members of staff are clear in their responsibilities around safeguarding and understand the procedures outlined in the safeguarding policy.
- Pupils feel very safe in school. They say that adults look after them well. Pupils develop a strong understanding of how to stay safe through the school's 'Healthy Minds, Happy Me' programme. Pupils say that they trust adults to support them when they need a little extra help and they are clear on the benefits of being able to talk to someone when they have any worries or concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers share a passion for learning with their pupils. Pupils work cooperatively in a mature manner. They confidently try out ideas, share their thinking and use these to deepen their understanding. Teachers encourage pupils to ask questions of each other and to challenge their peers to refine their thinking. Teachers also challenge and question pupils very effectively to check their understanding. As a result, pupils use communication exceptionally well to move their thinking and learning forward.
- Teachers develop pupils' subject-specific terminology very well. Verbal and written communication is central to all learning and every opportunity is seized to develop pupils' vocabulary. Teachers model language accurately and provide appropriate simplified explanations of challenging words when needed. They make regular and relevant links to real-life contexts that pupils are familiar with. This results in pupils responding to and meeting the very high expectations set by teachers to engage and communicate at a deep and meaningful level.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They work in close partnership with the teachers to plan and provide individually tailored support to pupils, including those with SEND within the specialised resource provision and in the mainstream school.
- Phonics is taught in a systematic but lively way which ensures that pupils progress swiftly through the phonics programme. Staff's unwavering dedication to challenge and extend pupils' application of phonics is impressive. This ensures that pupils develop strong decoding skills which they enjoy applying in their reading and writing.
- Teachers have a systematic approach to teaching both reading and writing. They make

the links between reading and writing visible and meaningful to pupils. Consequently, pupils read challenging texts with understanding; their writing is expressive and shows a sense of the reader.

- Teachers are highly effective at choosing challenging texts and using these texts skilfully within English lessons and throughout the wider curriculum. This provides pupils with regular opportunities to read with understanding and to develop and extend their vocabulary.
- Pupils apply accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling in their writing. Teachers plan high-quality, purposeful opportunities for pupils to write at length, both in English and across a wide range of subjects. Pupils' writing is also developed as a tool for reasoning, justifying and explaining. Pupils use what they know about different genres and their impressive vocabulary to write well presented, sophisticated pieces.
- Teachers check pupils' progress carefully. They use the information they collect to plan activities that match pupils' needs and abilities closely. Teachers are quick to identify and address pupils' misconceptions. This further supports the excellent progress pupils make.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and respectful. There is a mutual and deep respect between pupils and adults, and pupils and their peers. This is demonstrated within the classroom and at playtimes. Pupils say they feel safe, and most parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, agreed.
- Pupils take their roles of responsibility very seriously. Pupil voice is intrinsic in planning for both academic achievement and personal well-being. Pupils explain how the curriculum could be made better by saying what is good, how well they take it in and what they enjoy. They say, 'Pupil voice can make things better for you.' They know that their ideas and suggestions will be acted upon.
- Pupils are tremendously proud of their school and take pride in their work. Presentation across all subjects is of a high standard. Pupils relish opportunities to talk to visitors and show themselves to be inquisitive learners who enjoy asking questions and sharing what they know.
- Pupils have many opportunities to learn the skills they need to develop their emotional well-being, build their resilience and manage life's challenges. Pupils are clear about how their school's 'Golden Values' link to their development as individuals. Older pupils understand the things you need to know to be able to communicate on the internet or via text safely. As a result, pupils understand their responsibilities in keeping safe, both in the real and the virtual worlds. They are well informed about how to raise concerns and know that they can contact people inside school or at external organisations if they are worried about anything.
- Leaders work tirelessly to involve and engage families in supporting their children to keep safe and healthy. Workshops on e-safety and healthy cooking sessions for the

family have been well attended and emphasise how leaders take their role within their community seriously.

- The school's breakfast club provides a safe and welcoming start to the day. Pupils attend for a variety of reasons and, for some, the care and individual attention that they get supports a smooth transition into school and the start of their school day.
- Pupils with individual needs in the resource base are sensitively supported to develop independence and understanding of safety. Staff expertise is drawn upon to support individual development. They are unwavering in their commitment to providing these pupils with the personal skills that will help them to have some independence within their life.
- Parents of pupils who attend the resource base acknowledge the significant difference the positive partnership with leaders and staff makes. Leaders are skilled at supporting pupils and their families to be ready for the next stage of their education. They help families to recognise and value the uniqueness of their child and the provision that may best meet their educational and pastoral needs.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils conduct themselves very well within lessons and around the school. They concentrate well in lessons and are confident and responsive learners who successfully complete the tasks that they have been given.
- The organisation of the playground into clearly defined sections helps pupils to make individual choices of what to play with. Routines such as a rota for the outdoor gym equipment, first aid stations and staggered playtimes are established. These help pupils to behave responsibly and feel safe. Pupils enjoy the range of equipment on offer and use the extensive outdoor gym equipment sensibly.
- Pupils say there is no bullying and have confidence that it would be dealt with by adults if it did occur. Pupils recognise that bullying happens in different ways. They are clear that 'consequence cards' have a distinct purpose and firmly state that 'Consequence cards hardly ever happen.'
- Pupils have a deep understanding of the school's behaviour policy. They talk about the systems for supporting behaviour very precisely. They particularly enjoy earning 'golden tokens' in recognition of achievement and appreciate that leaders recognise and value their hard work.
- Leaders rigorously monitor pupils' attendance. Leaders implement procedures swiftly, including phone calls or texts on the first day of absence, carrying out home visits for vulnerable pupils and contacting schools where siblings attend. Internal initiatives such as free 'Kidz club' places, staggered entry, magic breakfasts and nurture time with an adult at the start of the school day are engaging specific groups of pupils. Leaders work closely with families and external agencies to provide additional support where needed. These robust and rigorous systems have improved attendance and reduced persistent absence. However, absence and persistent absence remain above the national averages.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Leaders make regular checks on pupils' progress. Leaders, teachers and the leader of special educational needs use 'pupil progress meetings' to swiftly identify pupils who are falling behind in their learning. They provide prompt, carefully targeted support to enable these pupils to catch up. As a result, all groups of pupils make strong progress over time.
- Most children enter the school with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. By the time they leave the Reception Year, the majority of children have caught up with their peers nationally. Pupils make outstanding progress as they move through the school.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils who achieve the required standard in the phonics screening check has improved strongly over time. The proportion that achieved the required standard in 2018 was significantly above the national average.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 was in line with the national average, as was the proportion that were working at greater depth. Pupils' books demonstrate that pupils who are currently in key stage 1 are making excellent progress.
- Pupils' progress by the end of key stage 2 in 2018 was above the national average in writing and well above the national average in reading and mathematics. For the two years prior to 2018, progress was well above national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Work in current pupils' books shows that this strong performance is being maintained.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive valuable support which enables them to make substantial and sustained progress over time. Leaders and teachers ensure that the building blocks and early concepts for phonics, vocabulary, reading, writing and mathematics are secure. By the end of key stage 2 in 2018, disadvantaged pupils' progress in reading and writing was in the top 20% of schools nationally. Their progress in mathematics was in the highest 10% of schools nationally.
- Pupils with SEND make excellent progress, both in the main school and the resource base. This is because leaders ensure that teaching meets these pupils' needs closely. Well-trained staff provide skilful support and careful use is made of additional funding to address individual pupils' barriers to learning. Pupils in the resource base make strong progress in their personal and social skills. They grow in independence, which means that they are also well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils achieve very well in a wide range of subjects. This is because lessons provide pupils with opportunities to develop their skills fully and build on prior learning and knowledge. They are well prepared for their next stage of education.

Early years provision

Good

- Staff develop strong partnerships with parents as children enter Nursery. As a result, children settle quickly and are keen to come to school.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the early

years provision. This is because they make regular checks on teaching and children's progress. Leaders use this information to devise action plans based on the areas for development identified. As a result, improvements are being driven forward in developing the learning environment, securing children's ability to choose their own activity and enhancing children's writing skills.

- Safeguarding is effective. All statutory welfare requirements are met. Adults understand and follow school procedures. Appropriate staff ratios are adhered to. The early years environments are safe, well organised and promote independence. The pastoral care of the children is a high priority.
- Teachers usually plan activities that meet children's needs closely. Activities include focused teaching times as well as opportunities for children to follow their interests. Staff's observations capture children's voice well and these are used to inform the planning of future activities. When planning, staff pay attention to children's interests, which helps children to engage well across all areas of learning.
- However, some activities in the Reception class are not challenging enough for the most able children. Occasionally, staff's questioning and interactions with pupils do not fully support and develop children's learning. As a result, some children do not consistently make the progress of which they are capable.
- Language and vocabulary development are central to all activities within the Nursery class. This emphasis on language development continues as children move through Nursery and into Reception. Staff model spoken English well, and they encourage the children to respond in full sentences. As a result, children become confident at engaging in conversation with each other, staff and visitors.
- Children are happy and well looked after in the early years. Staff encourage children to behave well and to become increasingly independent learners. Children learn how to manage risk effectively. Children develop secure attachments, confidence, independence and good communication skills that successfully prepare them for Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	103945
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10058497

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	284
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kathy Ross
Headteacher	Clare Sturmey
Telephone number	01384 255910
Website	www.gracemary.co.uk/
Email address	office@gracemary.sandwell.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2018

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The early years is made up of a Nursery class and a Reception class. The school has two Year 6 classes and one class in each of the other year groups.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is much higher than average.
- Most pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils with support for SEND is above average. The proportion of pupils supported through an education, health and care plan is much higher than average.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across all year groups. Some of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors undertook a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work across a range of subjects alongside school leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and leaders of the provision for pupils with SEND.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body and two other governors and a representative from the local authority, who is the school's improvement adviser.
- Inspectors talked with pupils informally at playtimes, visited the dining hall at lunchtime and observed pupils' movements around the school. A formal meeting also took place with pupils.
- Inspectors looked at behaviour at the start of the school day, during lessons and during breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- An inspector listened to pupils read and talked to them about the books they enjoyed and those that they are currently reading.
- An inspector observed the breakfast club and spoke to pupils who were attending.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day. They took account of the 48 responses to Ofsted's online parental questionnaire, Parent View, and the 31 free-text responses. Additionally, they took account of the 18 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 23 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including information about pupils' attendance, self-evaluation information, improvement plans, safeguarding records, curriculum planning and assessment records, minutes of governing body meetings and staff development records.

Inspection team

Kirsty Foulkes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Janice Wood	Ofsted Inspector
Amanda Clugston	Ofsted Inspector

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