

St John's Catholic Primary School

Trevu Road, Camborne, Cornwall, TR14 7AE

Inspection dates 10–11 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching is too variable. It has not been good enough to ensure that pupils make sufficient progress in Years 3 and 4.
- Teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough for pupils' work to always be set at the right level.
- Teachers do not rigorously check pupils' understanding or enable pupils to fully develop their independence and show what they have learned.
- Leaders and managers do not work consistently to the same high standard so the difference they make to teaching and learning is variable.
- The governing body has not monitored the school's work as regularly as it should and challenged leaders to tackle weaker performance swiftly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Good teaching in Reception, Year 2 and Year 6 ensures that pupils in those year groups make good progress and achieve well. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of each key stage are above the national average.
- The more able pupils are suitably challenged so that higher than average proportions reach the higher levels.
- The values, beliefs and attitudes promoted by adults ensure that pupils' moral and spiritual development is good.
- Pupils behave well, take pride in their school and are keen to learn. Their attendance is higher than in most other schools.
- Adults provide good care and support for pupils who need extra help, particularly those with medical needs.
- The headteacher and members of the governing body are strongly committed to the school. They have implemented detailed tracking systems and have a clear understanding of where further improvement is required.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 15 lessons taught by seven teachers. A small number of lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors heard a sample of pupils read, looked at pupils' past and present work in books and observed pupils in the playground and the dinner hall.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, middle leaders and members of the governing body. A telephone conversation was also conducted with a representative of the local authority.
- Informal discussions were held with several parents and carers. The inspectors also took account of 40 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Other aspects of the school's work were examined. Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's information on pupils' progress, plans for improvement and records relating to pupils' safety, their behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Ian Hancock, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Elizabeth Strange

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils attending the school are of White British heritage and there are few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium (additional money provided by the government for pupils who are eligible for free school meals, are in the care of local authority or have parents or carers in the armed services) is rising, but is lower than in most other schools.
- The proportion of pupils who need extra help and are supported by school action is below the average. The proportions of pupils who need extra help and are supported at the school action plus stage or with a statement of special educational needs are also below the average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards that set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make good progress in all year groups by:
 - ensuring that teachers in Year 3 and Year 4 raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve and share them with pupils in lessons
 - making sure that teachers in Year 3 and Year 4 evaluate pupils' progress more accurately in order to set work at the right level, particularly for the average- and lower-attaining pupils
 - rigorously checking whether pupils have understood the important ideas and making changes to the teaching in response
 - enabling pupils to choose how to approach their work and show how well they have understood the learning objective.
- Improve leadership and management at all levels so they make a greater difference to teaching and pupils' achievement by:
 - managing leaders' performance more robustly to ensure that each leader works to high standards in every aspect of their work
 - undertaking an external review of the work of the governing body so that members monitor the school's work more regularly and challenge leaders to swiftly tackle underperformance
 - making sure that monitoring reports and feedback to staff state clearly what difference actions have made to pupils' achievement
 - using the detailed tracking system to set measurable targets for improvement in each year group.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils do not make enough progress in Years 3 and 4. Pupils' learning in lessons and their past work in books show that teachers' expectations are not high enough. The work is not set at the right level, particularly for the average- and lower-attaining pupils.
- Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make good progress from their expected starting points in all areas of learning. Children settle quickly into school and develop the skills necessary to play and learn with others.
- Early literacy skills are developed well. Adults in the Reception class grasp opportunities to practise the sounds that letters make and develop children's early writing through direct teaching and a range of play activities. Children's skills in reading and writing when they leave the Reception class have improved and are above the levels expected for their age.
- Pupils make good progress overall across Key Stage 1. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time pupils leave Year 2 are above the average. In lessons, teachers check pupils' understanding and adjust their teaching in response so that tasks are usually set at the right level.
- Younger pupils are enthusiastic readers. When reading to an adult, they apply their knowledge of the sounds that letters make to work out new words. However, at times, pupils' regular reading books are too difficult and weaker readers spend too much time trying to work out unfamiliar words to be able to follow the story closely.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 5 and 6. In lessons, teachers skilfully help pupils with their learning, check their understanding and provide more demanding tasks in response. When pupils leave at the end of Year 6, their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above the average.
- Pupils that need additional help, including those in receipt of the pupil premium, make similar progress to the other pupils. When teaching is good, they make good progress due to well-trained adults and carefully planned programmes of support. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, adults competently assisted pupils that needed extra help in arranging coloured cubes and recording their workings to solve multiplication problems successfully.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- Teaching in Years 3 and 4 needs to improve. Teachers' views of the progress that some pupils make are over generous. Pupils in these year groups do not make enough progress or attain the standards they should.
 - Teachers do not ask pupils frequently to provide detailed answers or explain the reasons for their opinions. This makes it difficult for teachers to check how well pupils have understood the important ideas and to change their teaching in light of their responses.
 - Lessons do not promote pupils' independence enough. There are few opportunities for pupils to choose how to approach their work and show how well they have understood the learning. Consequently, pupils' progress slows and their evaluations at the end of lessons lack the detail necessary to help teachers plan the next steps for learning.
 - Teaching is usually good in the Reception class, Year 2 and Year 6. The strong features of lessons in these year groups include high expectations, a lively pace and a confident knowledge of subjects. Work is typically set at the right level so that children and older pupils make good progress and achieve well.
 - The daily teaching of phonics, (the sounds that letters make) is typically good. Lessons are structured carefully and teachers demonstrate well. The proportion of Year 1 pupils that reached the levels expected in last year's national screening test was comfortably higher than in most other schools.
 - The teaching of reading skills for older pupils is more variable. Weaker readers are well supported in lessons, for example when carrying out a science investigation. The school has rightly identified that pupils have a limited understanding of how to scan and skim read to locate information within a passage of text and summarise the main points.
 - Pupils know their writing and mathematics targets and use them to support their learning within lessons. Pupils who spoke with the inspector commented positively on how these targets were helping them to improve their work.
 - 'I like your painting', 'I'm proud of you' and 'I'm proud of you too', commented two children while painting together in the Reception class. The conversation in this lesson illustrates how successfully teachers and other adults promote important values and pupils' wider development.
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The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy school. In lessons, they listen attentively, are eager to learn and take pride in their work. Pupils' attitudes towards learning are positive. Their attendance has risen and remains higher than in most other schools.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons and at other times around the school. They show courtesy and consideration towards others, particularly those that are less mobile. Children in the Reception class play cooperatively with others commonly using such phrases as, 'Excuse me please' and 'It's kind to take turns.'
- Pupils that need additional help to manage their behaviour are supported well. Small group sessions teach important skills and ensure that all pupils have clear understanding the rewards and consequences of their behaviour.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They are aware of risk and know the steps they can take to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, for example when using the internet. Incidents of bullying are rare and pupils are confident that they are dealt with well.
- Subjects provide regular opportunities for pupils to learn important safety messages. During the inspection, a school crossing patrol person advised the youngest pupils how to cross the road safely. Subsequently, pupils demonstrated their good understanding through songs and actions.
- Most parents and carers think that their children are happy, safe and well looked after. Although a small minority are concerned about incidents of bullying, inspectors found that incidents are rare, but records of incidents should be more detailed.
- Pupils are keen to take on additional responsibilities. They talk maturely about the contribution of the school council, head pupils and 'Eco warriors'. Teachers do not fully exploit these positive attitudes in lessons because pupils are not given enough responsibility for their learning.

The leadership and management require improvement

- The effectiveness of leaders and managers is variable. There are inconsistencies in the extent to which individuals work to the same high standard. Consequently, the quality of teaching in some year groups does not reflect the school's expectations and ambition.
- Parents and carers expressed concerns about aspects of leadership and management. In particular, how promptly leaders followed up their concerns regarding the quality of teaching in some year groups. The inspectors' findings were similar. Parents and carers held positive views about most other aspects of the school.
- The headteacher has provided stable leadership following a long-standing period of turbulence. Her quiet determination and the reallocation of leadership responsibilities have secured improvements in teaching, pupils' attendance and achievement. Expectations have risen and the level of ambition in the school is growing.
- The English and mathematics subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator have taken concerted and successful action to improve pupils' achievement within their areas

of responsibility. Detailed plans have been implemented to support those pupils in need of additional help and their progress is tracked carefully against other pupils.

- Leaders monitor the pupils' learning in lessons on a regular basis and carefully track the progress that individuals make. Reports and feedback to staff do not comment clearly on the difference that actions have made to pupils' progress and attainment. Consequently, the improvements to pupils' achievement and teaching over time have been uneven.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Members' visits to monitor the school's work are infrequent and not linked sharply to the school's priorities for improvement. Leaders have not been sufficiently challenged to address staff underperformance swiftly.
 - Members of the governing body show a strong commitment to the school. The comprehensive systems put in place to track pupils' progress now enable members to ask important questions. Members of the governing body are aware of what the school does well and where improvement is needed. Some individual members spend a lot of time in school and have a good understanding of specific aspects of the school's work.
 - Procedures for keeping pupils safe meet current government requirements. There are robust arrangements in place for checking staff and other adults that may work with pupils.
 - Subjects taught across the school promote pupils' spiritual and moral development well. Pupils participate keenly in daily acts of worship and older pupils can discuss the key features of different religions. While pupils respond positively to sporting and artistic opportunities, their cultural understanding is less well developed.
 - The local authority has provided a sustained programme of support using a Local Leader of Education and local primary school. Training by partner schools for the English subject leader has improved the teaching of writing in his class and those of his colleagues.
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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	112008
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	401225

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	159
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Nicholas Talbot
Headteacher	Mrs Patricia Yardley
Date of previous school inspection	28–29 September 2009
Telephone number	01209 713944
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