

# St Catherine's RC Primary School

Moss Lane, Leyland, Lancashire, PR25 4SJ

## Inspection dates

2–3 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- The school's performance has declined since the previous inspection. Leadership capacity is weak and the school lacks clear and consistent direction. The school's self-evaluation and improvement plans are inadequate.
- Teaching is inadequate and actions by leaders and managers to improve the quality of teaching have not been effective.
- Pupils' achievement is inadequate. In particular, the more able pupils and boys do not achieve as well as they should.
- Pupils' performance is not checked regularly and information from assessments is not used well enough to tackle underachievement.
- There is not a clear understanding of what pupils should be achieving or aiming for. There are gaps in pupils' learning and a lack of challenge for the more able pupils and boys.
- The curriculum is inadequate. It is not planned to match the abilities and interests of pupils.
- The governing body does not effectively carry out its responsibilities to manage the performance of staff.
- Governors have not used the Government's pupil premium funding to make sure that pupils who need support catch up quickly and achieve their potential.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle in happily because they are well cared for. They make good progress because of the many opportunities for learning through play.
- Pupils feel safe and they are confident, articulate young people. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and their moral and social development is promoted well.
- Attendance has improved and pupils enjoy coming to school. They are polite and welcoming to visitors and keen to talk and express their views.
- Good quality teaching in the Reception class and in Year 5 succeeds in motivating and engaging children and pupils as well as accelerating their progress in these lessons.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons, of which three were joint observations with the acting headteacher. In addition, inspectors listened to pupils read, made brief visits to a series of lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, the chair of the governing body, representatives from the local authority, senior leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors took account of 42 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of available documentation, principally in relation to the safeguarding of pupils, attendance, behaviour and pupils' progress records.

## Inspection team

Marie Cordey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jean O'Neill

Additional Inspector

## Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

### Information about this school

- St Catherine's is a little smaller than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils identified as disabled or with special educational needs is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is 6%, which is lower than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations of attainment and progress.
- The deputy headteacher is acting as headteacher for the second time in the past year as the headteacher is absent through illness.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to accelerate pupils' progress across subjects, especially boys and the more able pupils, by:
  - raising expectations of pupils' achievement and providing further challenge and aspiration for pupils to reach the highest levels of work
  - matching work more closely to the interests and abilities of all pupils
  - providing specific training to enable teachers to set challenging targets and accelerate pupils' progress
  - deploying support assistants more effectively.
- Raise attainment and improve pupils' progress by:
  - setting challenging targets that accurately reflect pupils' starting points in Year 1 and reviewing these each half term
  - ensuring that the curriculum is broad, balanced and provides an in-depth, continuous coverage of the National Curriculum for Years 1 to 6
  - focusing sharply on pupils' acquisition of knowledge, especially in problem solving and investigational work in mathematics
  - increasing pupils' enjoyment of learning by making lessons interesting and matching work to their abilities.
- Urgently improve the leadership and management of the school by:
  - ensuring school leaders provide a clear sense of direction that supports and guides staff in making improvements
  - establishing clear and effective procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance in order to focus on the areas most in need of improvement
  - setting clear, challenging and measurable targets for the management and improvement of teachers' performance
  - strictly implementing and reviewing improvement plans that are closely linked to measurable outcomes for pupils.
- Improve governance by:
  - ensuring the governing body fulfils its responsibilities in relation to staff performance management
  - ensuring that available funds for pupils eligible for pupil premium are allocated to support their achievement.

**The achievement of pupils****is inadequate**

- Children in the Early Years Foundation stage make a good start to their school life. They are captivated by the many opportunities they have to enjoy learning. They begin to understand numbers and counting as well as how to link letters and sounds because activities are linked to their own experiences and interests. Children's physical and social skills are well developed in the very exciting outdoor learning areas where children become adventurous and curious about their learning.
- Pupils do not make the progress they should from starting points in Year 1 that vary from being above or in line with what is expected for their age. Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils who are entitled to support from the pupil premium do not achieve as well as they should.
- Although overall pupils' attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6, girls' attainment is higher than that of boys. Standards for the more able pupils are beginning to rise, especially in English, but are still lower than they should be. This reflects generally low expectations of pupils' attainment as well as a history of too little challenge.
- A significant proportion of parents do not feel that their children make sufficient progress and inspection evidence confirms this view. However, tailored support and close one-to-one teaching for some of the most vulnerable pupils results in improved rates of progress.
- Attainment for pupils at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics declined over a number of years although specific work with this age group brought about recent improvements. A further initiative improved writing in a number of year groups. However, this concentration on specific areas of concern leads to a piecemeal approach to raising standards rather than a coherent overall strategy. For example, while writing improved, attainment in reading and mathematics in Key Stage 2 declined.
- Evidence in pupils' books starkly demonstrates the lack of challenge. Year 4 targets, for example, are suitable for pupils who are two years younger. In some cases they are lower than the levels some of these pupils reached at the end of Year 2. Targets for each Year 1 pupil are identical and too low: they are not matched to individual's skills and abilities. Pupils' problem solving and investigational skills in mathematics are patchy and hold some pupils back.

**The quality of teaching****is inadequate**

- Although some teaching is good, too much requires improvement or is inadequate. Better teaching engages and motivates pupils. For example, in a Year 5 numeracy lesson, pupils worked on a range of carefully crafted activities to work out the right angles in triangles. They worked hard to produce work of high quality because they were expected to achieve their best in an atmosphere that was both scholarly and enjoyable.
- Expectations are often too low so that pupils find work easy and lose interest. Work is not clearly matched to pupils' interests or abilities and pupils are unsure about what exactly is expected of them. This is particularly the case for the more able pupils and boys who then lose pride and interest in their work.
- When teaching is good, teachers and support assistants skilfully question pupils to check their level of understanding and act quickly to clear up any confusion. However, this is not typical and there are too many examples of pupils' work that is not finished or, in some cases, has barely been started. The impact of the work of support assistants varies. It is most effective when the lesson is planned jointly with the class teacher and support is clearly matched to the specific needs of individual pupils in that lesson. Where it is less effective, the support assistant spends too much time observing the teacher or providing additional explanations.
- Marking, although up-to-date and regular, fails to tell pupils what they need to do to improve. Work in pupils' books shows that in too many classes the same work is expected of pupils regardless of their ability. Boys' work in particular becomes careless as time goes on and when teachers fail to challenge slow progress.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils****requires improvement**

- Pupils are proud to take on positions of responsibility on the school council and as prefects or as head boy and head girl. Older pupils conscientiously look after the younger ones. They welcome opportunities to discuss and debate social and environmental issues. Although they are keen to learn, occasionally their attitudes to learning deteriorate when teaching is not effective.
- Pupils get on well together in lessons and around school although there is some over-boisterousness in the playground which results in some minor accidents. Examples such as bumped heads and falling over are duly recorded in the accident book and pupils confirm that they are looked after when these accidents happen.
- There are very few examples of bullying and pupils are confident that any concerns they have will be listened to and acted upon. The majority of parents agree that behaviour is appropriate and that any incident of bullying is sorted out.
- Attendance has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is above average. The school's partnerships with families have improved attendance.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn to share and be considerate to others. They appreciate each other as well as their staff because they are respected and valued as individuals. They learn to become more independent as they gain confidence.

**The leadership and management****are inadequate**

- Despite extensive support from the local authority over a sustained period, improvements have been piecemeal. Action to improve the school's effectiveness has been started several times over a number of years but has not been sustained. Difficulties in staffing, particularly at senior levels, have resulted in the school's lack of direction or steer for improvement and ineffective support for staff.
- Training for teachers is not directed at improving the quality of their work. The management of teachers' performance is inadequate which means that teachers are not given the support and guidance they need to improve. Pay progression is not clearly linked to quality of teaching or outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils' performance in Years 1 to 6 is not tracked regularly and underachievement has not been tackled. There is no clear understanding of what pupils should be achieving or aiming for.
- The curriculum fails to meet the individual needs and abilities of pupils. Reading, writing and numerical skills are not developed in all subjects and pupils are not well prepared for their future. The inadequate achievement of some groups of pupils shows that the school does not effectively promote equality of opportunity.
- Extensive support from the local authority has not been effective in helping the school to improve largely because suggested actions have not been implemented consistently or systematically. Partnerships with parents have not allayed parents' significant concerns about leadership and management and were evident in their online questionnaire responses.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is apparent in their consideration and respect for other people's views and in their daily periods of reflection. However, their understanding and awareness of people from different backgrounds and cultures are limited.
- **The governance of the school**
  - With help from the local authority the governing body has identified weaknesses in the school. Nevertheless, governors have not been effective in holding school leaders to account for these weaknesses. The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. During the inspection, governors were not able to provide key documentation in relation to the performance management of staff. Governors have not ensured that the pupil premium funding has been used to make a difference to the achievement of those pupils for whom it is intended.

## 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>	119585
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	405868

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	225
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Anthony Burscough
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Christopher Dunne
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 October 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 423767
<b>Fax number</b>	01772 457656
<b>Email address</b>	head@st-catherines.lancs.sch.uk

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