

St Pius X RC Primary School

Gatehouse Avenue, Withywood, Bristol, BS13 9AB

Inspection dates 11–12 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
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 leaders, managers and governing body have not done enough to tackle serious shortcomings in the school's effectiveness.
- Pupils' achievement is inadequate and is worsening because there is too much inadequate teaching. Leaders have not done the right things to improve teaching.
- Pupils are not able to read and write well enough. Some adults do not say all the sounds letters make correctly.
- Teachers do not make accurate enough checks on how well pupils are doing. The work they give pupils is often too hard or too easy.
- Teachers do not keep pupils busy and maintain a good pace to their learning in lessons. Sometimes pupils lose attention and become unsettled.
- The school is not using the additional government funding (Pupil Premium) well enough to speed up the progress of those pupils it is intended for.
- Until recently, the governing body has not understood the causes of the school's weaknesses and has not demanded explanations from the school's leaders for the school's poor performance.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and staff provide a safe and caring school for the pupils.
- Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together, enjoy school and feel safe.
- The school provides good opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 13 lessons, two of which were joint observations with the senior leaders. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- The inspectors had discussions with two groups of pupils, the chair of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, and staff who have responsibility for leading and managing the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 10 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and talked to parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- They observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including the school’s own data on pupils’ progress, planning and monitoring documents, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

John Taylor, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Juliet Jaggs

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

- This is a smaller than average primary school, though the number of pupils has increased significantly this year. Its pupils come from the southern side of Bristol.
- The majority of pupils are White British, with about one in six from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- A well above average proportion of the pupils are known to be eligible for the Pupil Premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Higher than average numbers of pupils join and leave the school at different times through the year.
- Average proportions of pupils are identified for special help at the level known as School Action and School Action Plus; at present, no pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- In 2011, the most recent year for which results are confirmed, the school met the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There are six classes, including one mixed-age class, for pupils in Years 5 and 6. The school has the Bristol Standard for Early Years Education. The breakfast club is managed by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching by:
 - giving honest and accurate feedback to teachers on how to improve their teaching
 - making sure staff training meets the specific needs of individual teachers and assistants
 - improving the accuracy of teachers' assessments, and using the information about pupils' attainment to set pupils' work at the right level for their different abilities
 - making sure that teachers ask pupils probing questions and deal quickly with any misunderstandings
 - making sure pupils are kept busy learning and understand what they have to do in lessons.
- Raise achievement in literacy by:
 - making sure all staff say the sounds that letters make accurately
 - organising reading lessons so that all pupils know what they are learning, and the books they are reading match the level of their ability
 - encouraging pupils to write at length more frequently
 - spending more time talking with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Improve the checks leaders and managers make on how well the school is doing by:
 - identifying why pupils are not achieving well enough, taking swift action to tackle weaknesses, and making sure managers and teachers are held responsible for how well the pupils do in their work
 - checking on how well money, in particular the additional government funding (Pupil Premium), is being used to raise standards
 - looking at the results of the checks that are made of teaching, and using the outcomes to see how the school can be improved rapidly.
- Improve the governance of the school by making sure members of the governing body:
 - review the pupils' progress more often so they can challenge the school leaders about it on a more frequent basis

- are provided by the school with accurate information about the progress younger pupils are making in reading.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils' progress in reading and writing is not fast enough, particularly in Years 1 and 2. This is partly because, during the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make), not all sounds are pronounced accurately by teachers. In addition, reading lessons are not planned so that all children are reading books of the right level or are given reading tasks that are suited to their ability.
- Another reason that pupils are not making sufficient progress in reading and writing is that the style of teaching in most of the school does not encourage them to develop their literacy skills and ability to work on their own.
- There are weaknesses in mathematics as well as reading and writing, and standards are falling in all three areas. Although test results in 2011 were above the government's floor standard, unconfirmed results for 2012 are not.
- The school carries out checks on the levels all pupils are working at but this information is not always accurate enough. Consequently, pupils' work is not matched well enough to their different abilities.
- The school makes sure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are included in all activities. They receive adequate support, but their academic progress is not good enough for the same reasons as for other pupils. Pupils of all ethnic backgrounds make similarly inadequate progress, and those known to be eligible for the Pupil Premium also make inadequate progress. The progress of pupils of all backgrounds and abilities is too slow because of weaknesses in teaching.
- Progress is better in the Early Years Foundation Stage but it is still not fast enough. When children first join the school, their skills and experiences are below those normally expected for their age. The school makes sure the pupils settle quickly into the Reception class. They make the best progress in their social and physical development. By the time children leave the Reception class, their achievements in literacy, communication and the use of number are still below expectations.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching is not good enough in reading, writing and mathematics. The questions teachers ask pupils are weak and do not help them understand their work or encourage them to think hard enough. Some of the work the pupils are asked to do is not matched well to their abilities. The result is that progress is too slow in all three areas of learning.
- The sounds that letters and groups of letters make are not taught accurately. Younger children are not guided on how to work out unfamiliar words. Some of the support staff do not understand how they can best help with phonics teaching and pupils' learning in other lessons.
- Teachers often ask questions that require very short answers from the pupils. This gives them little information on how well pupils understand the work. Consequently, teachers are unable to correct misunderstandings or be precise when guiding pupils on how to gain a better understanding of the subject. This affects all subjects, including mathematics as well as reading and writing.
- The style of teaching does not encourage the pupils to develop their literacy skills and independence. For example, the overuse of worksheets limits the opportunities for pupils to practise their own writing. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, while activities are usually appropriate, occasionally the adults give too many instructions, and do not talk enough with the children about what they are doing. This means that the chance for children to improve speaking skills is missed.
- In some lessons, the teachers talk too much, limiting the time that pupils have for learning by themselves. This encourages pupils to become distracted and hinders their pace of learning.

- Some work that is given to the lower-attaining pupils is too difficult for them to understand. This means they do not know what they are meant to be doing and hinders their ability to learn new ideas during the lesson without further help.
- Marking of books is a stronger area. It is regular and consistent across the school. However, not all the teachers ask pupils to respond to the comments they write in pupils' books, which slows progress further.
- Many Key Stage 2 pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work; in Year 3, for example, the pupils are very clear about what they have been told to focus on. This is written into their books and pupils find it useful to be reminded in this way.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- The aspects of behaviour and safety that require improvement are to do with the way pupils work in lessons and also their attendance. Attendance is low, though the school is taking actions that have resulted in some improvements.
- In lessons, pupils are keen to finish their work, but they sometimes do not focus on the purpose of the task. This can result in them not being able to remember what they have learnt afterwards. When they have finished a piece of work, they can become unsettled, rather than finding more work to do or thinking about ways to improve their work. This is a direct result of weaker teaching.
- Pupils know when their behaviour is good and recognise quickly when it is not. They have a good view of what is acceptable and acknowledge that they do not always reach these levels.
- The school records instances of low level disruption. However, these records are discarded at the end of the week so there is no overall analysis of behaviour that can be used to improve lessons or review pupils' behaviour. Any links between poor behaviour and the quality of teaching are not checked carefully which means that school leaders are missing important information to help them improve both behaviour and teaching.
- Around the school, the pupils are courteous and well mannered. They know how to talk to adults and show respect for each other. They respond quickly to instructions to behave better.
- The 'Playground Promise' is well understood by pupils and guides their behaviour at playtime and during lunchtime. In the promise, they accept responsibility for pledging good behaviour in the playground and they are encouraged to own up if they do not behave well.
- Parents and carers have a positive view of behaviour in the school. They appreciate the school is very caring, approachable and will deal with issues.
- Pupils have an accurate understanding of bullying. Instances of bullying are rare in the school, and pupils say they trust the teachers to deal effectively with any bullying that does occur.
- Older pupils are aware of the precautions they should take when using the internet.
- Most pupils behave well and feel safe in the school.

The leadership and management

are inadequate

- The school has not done enough to improve the areas of weakness identified in the previous inspection report. There has been some improvement in attendance but the weaknesses in English and the quality of teaching are still apparent.
- The school has not made sure that accurate checks are made on pupils' work to gauge the standard they have reached and whether this is good enough. This means that checks on progress are not reliable. The school was not able to provide any evidence that money from the Pupil Premium has raised achievement for the pupils it is intended for, because school leaders and managers do not make any checks on how effectively it is being used.
- The information the school has about standards and progress has not been used to identify what has gone wrong or how to improve it. Teachers do not give enough thought to why things are

not going well, and are not helped by school leaders to do something about it.

- The management of the Reception class is good; staff routinely make observations of children as they learn and planning is purposeful. However, leaders in the Early Years Foundation Stage have not done enough to help the rest of school improve literacy, for example by giving enough attention to boosting speaking skills in lessons in the Reception class.
- The school's checks on the quality of teaching are accurate, but the information gathered from lesson observations is not used to help each teacher improve. The information is not used well enough to set teachers' performance targets. Teachers are not given the clear message about what they need to do to improve their teaching and they are not getting the right training to help them improve their work.
- In the past, weaker teachers have not been held responsible for the progress of pupils in their classes. They have been allowed to submit inaccurate assessments and this has hidden the lack of progress of some groups of pupils. Leaders are now starting to challenge teachers better when pupils do not learn fast enough.
- Although more attention is now given to checking on the quality of teaching in lessons, subject leaders are not doing enough to pull this together and get an accurate picture about the quality of pupils' learning across all subjects. This means that leaders in the school are not clear about where their priorities need to be.
- The school is trying to involve parents and carers in their pupils' education. The joint work with the City of Bristol College, which is helping parents and carers support their children's reading, is a step in the right direction but has had limited impact so far.
- The school's leaders provide a caring and safe environment for the pupils to learn in. This is appreciated by pupils, parents and carers, and staff.
- School leaders provide good opportunities for the pupils' spiritual development. Examples of this are seen in the assemblies, where Christian stories are used as a focus for reflection.
- The local authority has provided support for the school in the following areas:
 - providing a system to help the staff to analyse pupils' progress
 - the introduction of a scheme for the teaching of literacy
 - reporting on the achievement of pupils, the quality of teaching, and the leadership and management of the school.

These actions have yet to show any impact on the pupils' achievement.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- This is inadequate because the governing body has failed to hold school leaders responsible for the school's effectiveness, particularly in relation to pupils' achievements, teaching quality and tackling areas of weakness.
- The governing body does not do enough to find out and challenge school leaders about the benefits of any additional support for pupils' reading, particularly when additional government funding is used.
- Until recently, the governing body was not working with school leaders to review information about pupils' progress and judge for themselves whether progress was good enough.

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	109252
Local authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	405228

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	Malcolm Jones
Headteacher	Tony Halloran
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 January 2011
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