

St Catherine's Catholic Primary School

Highdown Drive, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 6HL

Inspection dates 30–31 January 2013

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

- Pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics requires improvement as it is not yet good. This is due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching over time.
- Teachers do not always make sure questioning challenges pupils' ideas or work is pitched at the right level for them, and this slows their progress.
- Pupils are not consistently involved in improving their work through using their targets or responding to teachers' marking.
- Children in the Reception class are not challenged enough through activities that excite their curiosity or questioning that extends their knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils do not have enough chance to solve practical problems in mathematics.
- Leaders are not sufficiently rigorous or accurate in checking the quality of teaching to make sure that it is consistently good.
- Staff who manage subjects or aspects of the school are not involved enough in checking what is happening in the classroom or holding staff to account for the progress their pupils make.
- Governors do not have a good enough idea of how well pupils are doing and this limits their ability to hold the school to account

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make good progress in their reading because it is well taught.
- Improved provision for the teaching of the sounds that letters make, particularly in the Reception class, is increasing children's rates of progress.
- There are pockets of good progress in most year groups.
- Improved checks on pupils' progress mean the school is able to give specific help to those who need it, so that no pupils are left behind.
- Strengths in art and music are increasing pupils' enjoyment and achievement.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have created a strong, caring community where pupils behave well, and feel safe and well cared for.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 13 lessons or part lessons, of which two were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors, a local authority officer, the leadership team and other senior staff.
- Inspectors took account of the 22 responses to the online Parent View survey.
- They observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' current progress, planning and checks on the quality of teaching, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.
- The inspectors listened to pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read.

Inspection team

Janet Sinclair, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Carnaghan

Additional Inspector

David Storrie

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Catherine's is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, some of whom are at an early stage of learning English, is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The number of pupils eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils in local authority care, from armed forces families, or those known to be eligible for free school meals) is average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- None of the school's pupils receives alternative provision off site.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring consistently good or better teaching through:
 - setting work at the right level for all pupils
 - using questioning that challenges pupils and extends their understanding
 - limiting teachers' talk so that pupils are given more time to explore ideas and develop their understanding
 - providing more occasions in mathematics when pupils can use their problem-solving skills
 - developing marking and target-setting so that pupils know the next steps in their learning and use them to improve their work, responding to any advice they are given.
- Offer children in the Early Years Foundation Stage independent activities that excite their curiosity.
- Build the capacity of leadership and management to drive improvement by:
 - making sure leaders check on teaching with greater rigour and accuracy so that it becomes more consistent
 - developing the role of staff who manage subjects or aspects of the school so that they are more involved in checking pupils' learning and holding staff accountable for how well pupils in their classes are doing
 - making sure governors have a clear understanding of how well pupils are doing to help them hold the school to account for pupils' achievement.
 - An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics requires improvement across the school. Their attainment is broadly average. Pupils from ethnic minority groups and those speaking English as an additional language make similar rates of progress to their classmates.
- Although writing assessments take place, practice varies between classes in their frequency and they are not always used well enough to set next steps for pupils' learning. This, linked to the limited opportunities for pupils to respond to marking, hinders their progress.
- In mathematics, although good use is made of regular homework as well as detailed planning for lessons, work is not always pitched at the right level for pupils and there are not enough opportunities for solving practical problems, and this slows progress.
- Much has been put in place to improve provision in reading such as a wide range of new books, clear systems for marking and regular guided reading. This has meant progress in reading has improved and is now good. Pupils say they enjoy reading and get good encouragement from staff.
- Good provision in art and music is increasing pupils' enjoyment and achievement. For example, there is a school band, an able pupils' music group and pupils in Year 4, 5 and 6 learn to play a brass instrument. Effective art work ranges from the traditional to the abstract, with clear reflections by pupils on their learning.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs get good support from teaching assistants to help them keep up. However, the work planned for them in whole-class lessons is not always well matched to their needs and this slows their overall progress.
- The school uses pupil premium funding well through, for example, additional teaching of the sounds that letters make, literacy and specific play activities. Pupils' progress is at least in line with national expectations and sometimes better. Their average point score in national tests shows that their attainment is in line with national expectations for their group. Pupils who start school with very little English have their needs quickly assessed so that they get the right level of support to improve their English language skills.
- Improved tracking of pupils' progress means that those not doing well enough are now quickly identified and given extra support. This is helping to promote greater equality of opportunity and deals with any discrimination through closing the gaps in attainment between different groups of pupils.
- Children enter Reception with skills and abilities below those expected for their age and mainly make progress that requires improvement in all areas of learning, except in the sounds that letters make, where they are making good progress due to effective teaching.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching over time requires improvement as pupils' learning has not been good enough. Inconsistencies in practice remain and this slows overall progress.
- Teachers do not always pitch work at the right level for pupils. For example, group activities in some mathematics lessons are the same for each group so that some pupils find the task too difficult and others too easy. Additionally, teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to solve mathematical problems related to real-life situations and this slows their progress.
- In some lessons, a lack of challenging questioning or too much teacher-talk means that pupils do not get the chance to reflect in order to extend their ideas or develop their skills.
- Pupils have targets for improvement and teachers mark pupils' work regularly. However, they do not always make sure they set next steps regularly or that pupils respond through correcting their work, and this limits its impact.
- There is an improving picture, with some good teaching enabling good progress. Where lessons

are good, they are well structured, and build on previous learning, expectations are high and work is pitched at the right level for all pupils. This was clearly seen in a mathematics lesson in Year 5 and a literacy lesson in Year 3, where pupils made good progress.

- Good relationships and a welcoming environment make sure that children in the Reception class feel safe and secure. Strong teaching of the sounds that letters make, through small-group work well matched to children's needs, now means that they develop reading and writing skills well. However, activities that the children undertake by themselves are not always interesting enough to excite their curiosity and adult questioning does not challenge them enough to broaden and extend their ideas.
- Well-trained teaching assistants provide effective one-to one and small-group work for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium receive targeted support and this, alongside careful checking of how well they are doing, helps them to keep up with other pupils.
- Teachers make good use of homework, including a homework club, to reinforce pupils' learning. Pupils were very positive about this and said, 'It helps us to remember stuff.'

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils mainly behave well in lessons and around the school. They clearly know what is expected of them and are keen to behave well. Pupils are fully aware of the rewards and sanctions that apply. Pupils' behaviour is good overall. It is not better than this because sometimes when lessons do not engage them, they become restless and fidgety.
- There are no recorded incidents of bullying. Pupils say that there is very little bullying in the school and that when it does occur, staff deal with it speedily and effectively. Good use of assemblies, and the school council's production of a leaflet on bullying and how to deal with it, help to raise pupils' awareness.
- There are few pupils with identified behaviour problems. Where needed, they receive effective one-to-one support which minimises any disruption to other pupils in their class.
- Pupils have good attitudes to school and are respectful and courteous towards each other. They enjoy the opportunities they get to work together on tasks, particularly when it involves discussing their work.
- Attendance is broadly average and the school works hard to encourage good attendance and punctuality.
- The school provides a safe environment for its pupils. Both parents and pupils strongly agree that the school is a safe place. Pupils learn about keeping safe through, for example, talks from the police and fire services and talks on e-safety.
- The few parents who responded to the online Parent View survey strongly agree that their children are safe in school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the checking of the quality of teaching and learning is not rigorous enough to make sure that practice is consistently good.
- Although subject leaders work hard to bring about improvement in their areas of responsibility, they do not monitor what goes on in classrooms. This limits their ability to drive improvements in their areas.
- Senior leaders have done much to bring about improvement since the previous inspection. The key issues have been tackled, including some underachievement, there have been improvements in reading and there are initiatives to improve mathematics and writing. This demonstrates the school's capacity for further improvement.

- The school has a detailed process for setting targets for staff that means they have individual and whole-school priorities linked to improving the quality of their performance. Leaders make sure they get the support they need. Staff particularly appreciate the opportunity this gives them to contribute, for example, through enhancing the school's music.
 - Subjects and topics are appropriately planned and well structured and include 'creative weeks' that inspire pupils. Pupils' experiences are enhanced well through visits, visitors and after-school clubs.
 - The school contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Staff make sure that pupils know right from wrong, have opportunities to reflect in assemblies and develop their cultural awareness through music and art.
 - The local authority offers sound professional support to the school that is helping senior staff in their drive to bring about further improvement.
 - The school works well with parents and makes sure they are well informed through fortnightly newsletters, curriculum meetings and annual reports on their children's progress. The small number who responded to the online Parent View survey unanimously agreed that they would recommend the school to others.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors fulfil their statutory duties and have a reasonable knowledge of the quality of teaching. They monitor the school's finances carefully, including the use of pupil premium funding. However, they do not have a good enough knowledge of pupils' rates of progress in school or how these compare nationally, including for pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, and so cannot accurately monitor this aspect of the school's effectiveness. Governors undertake training to develop their expertise and keep them informed of local and national initiatives. They are involved in setting targets for the headteacher and are aware of a similar process for staff. Consequently, they have a secure knowledge of how the performance of staff links to increases in salary. They make sure that appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place in order to keep pupils and staff safe.
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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	126040
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	402372
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Bedford
Headteacher	Gill Howell
Date of previous school inspection	27–28 April 2010
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