

St Ann's Catholic Primary School

McIntyre Road, Stocksbridge, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S36 1DG

Inspection dates 6–7 February 2013

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

- Overall, from a little below average starting points when they begin school, pupils make progress at a rate which is similar to that seen nationally. However, the rate of progress in mathematics, for boys and for the most-able pupils, is less than that seen overall. Progress in writing is better than average.
- In 2012, the standards reached by pupils in Year 6 were a little below average continuing a gradual decline in recent years. In Year 2, standards have remained around average.
- The governing body ensures that funds generated by the pupil premium are used to provide additional support, particularly in literacy. As a result the attainment and progress of pupils eligible for free school meals, as shown by their average points scores, are similar to most other pupils overall.
- The progress made by pupils with special educational needs follows the same average trends as other pupils.
- As a result of some weak teaching in recent years, and regular staff turnover, pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards their learning have suffered. The classroom management of some pupils' behaviour needs improvement.
- The quality of teaching, in recent years, has not been good enough to ensure that pupils achieve well. Teaching varies too much from class to class and across subjects.
- Since the arrival of the new headteacher, actions to tackle weaknesses in teaching, pupils' progress and behaviour have quickened considerably, but not enough time has elapsed to see the full impact.

The school has the following strengths

- The new senior leadership team is making rapid improvements to monitoring teaching, pupils' progress and to improving pupils' behaviour. Parents, staff and governors are united in their support for the clear direction set by the headteacher.
- Initiatives to improve pupils' writing have resulted in much improved attainment. Significant improvements have been made to the teaching of reading due to effective staff training and setting arrangements for pupils' to learn letters and sounds (phonics).

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons by four different teachers, all of which were joint observations with the headteacher. Additionally, the headteacher was observed giving feedback to two of the teachers.
- A group of pupils met with the inspector. Discussions were also held with staff, including senior and curriculum leaders. A meeting was held with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. A telephone discussion was conducted with a senior representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the views of a group of parents with whom he met during the inspection. There were no responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Additionally, the questionnaires from 10 staff were considered.
- The inspector read a range of documents. These included information on the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance, improvement plans, pupils' current progress, policies and records on safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

John Coleman, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The numbers of girls and boys are uneven and there are some cohorts in which three-quarters of pupils are boys.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, or looked after by the local authority, is similar to the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British and almost all pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2011 but, due to maternity leave, was absent for most of the academic year 2011/12. The senior leadership team comprising the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader have been in place since September 2012.
- Half of the classes are currently taught by temporary teachers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching and eradicate any inadequate teaching by:
 - providing training in the teaching of mathematics for all staff so that their subject knowledge is strengthened
 - increasing the expectations of how much progress the more-able pupils can make in lessons
 - devising ways to better interest boys, especially in mathematics
 - improving the quality of teachers' marking
 - reviewing the school's policy for teaching and identifying the key features of good and outstanding teaching to provide guidance for staff
 - making better use of the school's data tracking and ensuring that teachers use this to plan more challenging activities for all groups of pupils making better use of the good teaching practice of senior leaders.
- Improve standards in English and mathematics, especially for boys and the more-able pupils by:
 - setting higher expectations for pupils' progress in lessons and over time
 - reviewing the curriculum for mathematics and reducing the over reliance on commercial worksheets in some year groups
 - creating a greater emphasis on the teaching of number skills
 - ensuring that the timetable for mathematics in every class provides more frequent opportunities for pupils to learn mathematical skills and knowledge
 - fully implementing leaders' strategies for improving the teaching of reading through the focus on letters and sounds (phonics).

- Increase the impact of leaders actions on the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement, behaviour and attitudes to learning by:
 - setting higher, more consistent expectations for behaviour in all lessons
 - providing more interesting lessons which capture pupils' interests and help sustain their concentration
 - fully implementing the school's new behaviour policy with a greater emphasis on rewards
 - ensuring all the points for improvement above regarding teaching and standards, are sharply planned and quickly embedded so that the school's performance is good within five school terms.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- From below average starting points, pupils make generally average progress throughout the key stages to reach standards which are, overall, a little below average by age 11.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children made improving rates of progress over the past three years and the 2012 cohort entered Year 1 with broadly average skills for their age.
- In Key Stage 1, most pupils make average progress in reading, writing and mathematics to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 2. However, progress in mathematics, for boys and for the most able is weaker. For example, in 2012 the percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 in mathematics was around half of that in reading and writing. In reading, girls achieved slightly above average scores whilst the boys were below average.
- In Key Stage 2, most pupils continue to make the progress expected of them. Progress in mathematics across Years 3 to 6 is less than for English. Not enough of the more-able pupils are reaching the standards they should. For example, in 2012 almost half of pupils made more than expected progress in English, but in mathematics this was around one in 10.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, make similar average progress to attain a little below average standards according to average points scores at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Gaps between how well boys are doing and how well girls achieve have widened in recent years. In Key Stage 1, girls do much better than boys in reading and writing. In Key Stage 2, girls do better than boys in English and mathematics. Leaders' actions to tackle this gap show significant progress in writing and encouraging early improvement in reading.
- In some classes pupils make good progress. For example, in the Reception and Year 5/6 classes. This is because teaching is mostly good in these classes.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- In the last three years, monitoring reports by the school and the local authority show that the quality of teaching in the school ranges from good to inadequate. About half of teaching is good with much of the rest requiring improvement.
- Observations during the inspection confirm this profile of teaching. Teaching varies across the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and across subjects. For example, much of the teaching of reading, especially that which focuses on letters and sounds (phonics), is good. Conversely, teaching is considerably weaker in some mathematics lessons.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work in books further supports this judgement. Some very good examples of pupils' writing are evident, which are neatly presented, written at length and demonstrate good standards of grammar and punctuation. The reverse is true in many pupils' mathematics books, in some classes, which contain less volume of recorded work, untidy presentation and show a lack of attention to basic number skills. Some teachers mark work in a way that helps pupils do better next time, but not all.
- In the best lessons, teaching is characterised by good relationships between pupils and staff, good behaviour, interesting tasks set at suitably challenging levels for different groups and good progress in learning new skills and knowledge. In lessons to teach pupils about letters and sounds (phonics), teaching assistants provide good support and guidance for the many pupils who are grouped by ability. Consequently, pupils are beginning to make good progress in learning these important reading skills.
- In weaker lessons, teaching is often uninspiring and all pupils are expected to complete the same task. Pupils quickly become bored as they are asked to concentrate on things they already know. As a result pupils' interest quickly wanes, behaviour deteriorates and progress slows. Teachers' mathematical subject knowledge is not always secure enough and there is an over-

reliance on commercial worksheets in some classes.

- All teachers prepare and organise lessons using plans which highlight the aims for pupils' learning. In weaker lessons, the plans are too broad and do not make allowances for the different starting points of different groups of pupils. Few of the teachers' plans use the school's tracking data about pupils' attainment to identify the precise level of difficulty needed to stretch all pupils, especially the most able.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The school generally succeeds in encouraging pupils to behave well. Parents are right to think that, for most of the time, pupils are well behaved.
- Minor misbehaviour, usually from boys, is a feature of some lessons. Pupils and parents acknowledge that this sometimes interrupts pupils' learning. This is mostly the result of pupils becoming restless due to uninteresting teaching, especially in mathematics lessons.
- Around the school and on the playground, pupils are sociable with each other in the main. Leaders' actions to improve playground activities, especially through the appointment of a play leader, are bringing about improvement, especially to boys' behaviour. A new staggered lunchtime is providing much needed extra space for pupils to play and enjoy.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and parents share this confidence. Supervision, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is vigilant. Staff provide well for pupils' welfare. Staff training for first aid, child protection and safeguarding is up to date and at the required level.
- Pupils whose circumstances may put them at risk are very well supported. The school makes effective use of external agencies.
- Pupils are punctual and attendance is in-line with national averages.
- 'Proud to be me' assemblies celebrate pupils who improve their behaviour and in particular when this leads to better learning. The new behaviour policy, which promotes a greater emphasis on rewarding good behaviour, is appreciated by pupils who say they like the smiley faces and think it is making a difference.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The headteacher has a clear view of how successful the school can be. She is very well supported by her two senior teachers who share her ambitions for the school's performance. Communication between this senior team and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body is good and informative. Parents are confident in the school's leadership and praise the headteacher for her clear mindedness and approachability.
- Actions put into place by the school's leaders have arrested the school's recent decline, as shown by the falling standards in Key Stage 2, and are successfully addressing the weaknesses in teaching and pupils' behaviour. It is early in this improvement process, but there are clear signs that these actions are working. For example, the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) is now good, due to the impact of effective staff training, new setting arrangements for pupils based on their ability and the good deployment of teaching assistants to support teaching.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The local authority provides suitable support to school leaders through a school's advisor and the diocese helps by brokering the support of an external educational consultant. Monitoring procedures are much improved this year and staff are held to account for their own performance. Leaders' plans are clear about the areas for improvement but the plans require greater precision about what is expected at frequent intervals. For example, plans contain broad aims and intentions for the current year but do not show term-by-term targets for how teaching and pupils' progress will improve.
- Leaders have developed a good system for tracking the progress of pupils. Meetings are held every half term to discuss the results of checks about pupils' learning and progress. These are

plotted on charts which show how pupils are progressing against the school's expectations. It is a relatively new system. Teachers do not yet use this data effectively to help them plan lessons so that all pupils are provided with suitably interesting and challenging tasks to move their learning on quickly.

- Curriculum leadership is under developed. The many changes to staff and the instability this causes is a continued hindrance. Consequently, senior leaders take temporary responsibility for areas of the curriculum and sections of management which, with a settled staff, ought to be given to others.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is proud of the school and keen for its success. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body understand the school well, though minutes of the meetings of the full governing body and its committees show that much of the work of the governing body is concentrated on a small number of governors. Statutory responsibilities are met including those for safeguarding pupils. Policies and procedures are suitably in place. Performance-management arrangements for all staff, including the headteacher, are rigorous, fair and link clearly to salary progression. Despite the difficulties caused by staffing turbulence, the governing body shows determination to recruit good quality teachers, as shown by their recent re-advertising of a vacant post because of dissatisfaction over the quality of applicants. The governing body utilises the pupil-premium funding effectively. Monies are used to provide play leader support before school and at lunchtime, aimed at improving pupils' behaviour and enjoyment, and also, to provide extra support for pupils in literacy as demonstrated by the effective arrangements for teaching pupils letters and sounds (phonics). Whilst the inequalities between pupils' achievement in reading and writing are being tackled successfully, there remain significant differences in the performance of boys and girls, the most able and for many pupils in mathematics.

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	107152
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	403032

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	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael O'Brien
Headteacher	Sarah Eady
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2007
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