

St Charles' Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Norfolk Street, Hull, HU2 9AA

Inspection dates 19–20 February 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

- Although there are some examples of good and outstanding teaching it is not of a sufficiently high quality to bring about good achievement and increase the proportions of pupils at both Key Stages 1 and 2 who reach the levels of which they are capable.
- In some classes, teachers do not make enough use of the information about pupils' attainment and progress when planning lessons, to ensure that the work set is well matched to pupils' different abilities.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical and writing skills to meaningful activities in other subjects.
- Although leaders make regular checks on the school's performance, they do not use the information sufficiently well to develop plans which are sharply focused on key actions to bring about rapid improvements in teaching and learning.
- The school's plan to bring about improvements does not clearly state how leaders will measure the success of the school's actions.
- Although governors are supportive, they have not challenged the school well enough about its performance. They are now more aware of its strengths and weaknesses and are increasingly holding leaders to account.

The school has the following strengths

- St Charles is a school where every pupil matters. All staff are committed to providing a caring environment in which pupils feel safe and are extremely happy. Pupils enjoy school.
- This is an improving school. The strong leadership of the headteacher and the support she is receiving from all staff is starting to drive change.
- Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress.
- Pupils behave well around the school and in lessons where they demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They are respectful towards each other and welcome pupils new to the school and visitors.
- Attendance is above average and rising.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils from Year 1 to Year 6, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body, the National Leader in Education appointed to the school to develop leadership and management, senior and middle leaders and a representative from the local authority. Short discussions were held with pupils at break times and lunchtime.
- Discussions were also held with parents at the beginning of the school day to ascertain their views of the school because the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were too few to be meaningful.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and took into account the work in pupils' books, the school's own data on pupils' current progress, the school's improvement plans, planning and monitoring information and minutes of governing body meetings. Records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding were also considered.

Inspection team

Anthony Kingston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Cathy Morgan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced changes in staffing and since May 2012 the school has had three headteachers. The current headteacher has been in post since January 2013.
- The school received an Ofsted monitoring inspection in November 2011. Prior to this inspection it was receiving a high level of support from the local authority. In 2012, the decision was taken to engage the support of the National College of School Leadership to help the school continue to improve. This resulted in the temporary appointment of a National Leader in Education to help the school's leadership and management teams to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' attainment more rapidly.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those from service families and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- Most pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is well above average. Many pupils join the school speaking little or no English. A high proportion of pupils join the school at times other than the usual starting points and many are at the early stages of learning English.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and raise pupils' achievement by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving
 - ensuring teachers use information from assessments carefully so that activities meet the different needs and abilities of all pupils
 - providing more well-planned opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills to problem-solving activities
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills across different subjects
 - ensuring that marking consistently provides pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work and that they are given the opportunity to respond and act on the advice given.
- Improve leadership at all levels, including governance, so that the quality of teaching improves at a faster rate by:
 - developing the role of leaders with particular responsibilities so they are given more opportunities to check and improve the quality of teaching in their areas
 - ensuring that the school's plans for improvement contain clear targets and milestones so that leaders can measure how effective their actions have been
 - improving arrangements to check the performance of teachers so that they understand precisely what they need to do to improve their teaching
 - ensuring that all governors have a thorough understanding of the school's provision and outcomes, enabling them to support and challenge the school more effectively.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage is very low, especially in the area of communication, language and literacy. Children leave the Reception class having attained standards that are low. This reflects good progress because of good teaching and the exciting range of well-planned activities which take account of their individual needs.
- By the time pupils leave Key Stage 1, they reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that, while remaining stubbornly below average, are now starting to show a positive trend of improvement.
- In Key Stage 2, the progress pupils make from year to year is uneven. As a result, progress from their starting points is not good overall and results in levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics which remain below average by the time pupils leave Year 6.
- Pupils from all different minority ethnic groups progress at the same rate as their White British classmates and those who join the school other than at the usual times make similar progress.
- Since the introduction of a new system to teach letters and sounds in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, the development of pupils' early reading skills is improving more rapidly. This is reflected in the proportion of pupils aged six who achieved the national expectation in the check of their understanding of the sounds that letters make. Although this was below the national average, it reflected good progress from their very low starting points. Pupils quickly move on to gain personal enjoyment from reading books on their own. They understand what they read and show a mature ability to discuss moral and ethical issues contained in the text, such as the effects on family life of domestic violence.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs make progress similar to that of their classmates. Their progress is checked and programmes of work are planned to help them improve. The majority of pupils joining the school who speak English as an additional language quickly learn to speak English because of the emphasis placed on speaking and listening and the effective use of bi-lingual teaching assistants.
- The group of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium make good progress in English and mathematics. This includes pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Their performance in English and mathematics is equal to, and last year was higher than, that of other pupils in the school who are not eligible, as seen in their average points scores.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies too much from year to year and requires improvement. It is consistently good in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Year 2 and Year 6 yet in these and other year groups there are too many lessons where the expectations of what different groups of pupils should achieve are not high enough.
- Although teachers' understanding of data relating to pupils' progress is improving, this information is not always used well enough to plan lessons and provide suitable activities that are at the right level of difficulty for pupils of all abilities. This means that the rate at which some pupils make progress from one year to another is inconsistent and leads to some underachievement.
- Rightly, emphasis is placed on the teaching of basic skills. However, pupils across all year groups are not provided with enough opportunities to engage in extended and creative writing activities across other subjects, nor are they given enough opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to real-life, problem-solving activities.
- In the best lessons no time is wasted. Teachers' introductions are brief and focused and their explanations are clear and precise. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, the teacher and her team of teaching assistants each focused on groups with different needs. Within minutes of entering the room, each adult had pupils working enthusiastically on activities which were well

matched to their needs. They questioned, challenged, consolidated the learning of each group and corrected misconceptions swiftly without putting the learning of others on hold.

- Marking of pupils' work is regular but inconsistent. In the best practice, comments are linked to pupils' targets, are helpful in showing pupils how to improve their work and they are given time in lessons to respond to teachers' comments, practise their skills and correct misconceptions and mistakes. This good practice is, however, not evident across the school.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support to ensure those pupils who join the school from other countries quickly gain an acquisition of the English language.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The relationships between pupils of different ages and ethnic groups are harmonious. Pupils demonstrate respect for other cultures and beliefs that are different from their own. This is because diversity is celebrated throughout the school. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and welcoming to those who are new to the school.
- Pupils enjoy school and have good attitudes to learning. This is reflected in their attendance which is has improved spectacularly to above average.
- Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay safe, for example, when they use the internet. They say they feel very safe in school and were keen to tell inspectors that bullying is extremely rare.
- Pupils take their responsibilities seriously saying that, 'It's a good way to say thank you for everything our teachers do for us'. The opportunities offered to pupils to play a part in the life of the school provide purposeful ways to extend their moral and social development.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They fully understand the Christian principles which underpin the school's highly positive culture of respect and consideration for others. Pupils have a strong sense of reverence, as seen in the time set aside for reflection in assemblies and at the end of the day.
- The deployment of the family worker has been pivotal in enhancing communication between home and school. She has worked relentlessly to help parents resolve any difficulties which could adversely affect their child's performance at school and to improve pupils' attendance.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders with particular responsibilities are not sufficiently engaged in checking the quality of teaching and learning in their areas. Teaching is checked regularly but assessments are often overly generous and, as a result, teachers' targets for improvement lack clarity and, on occasions, are misguided. Teachers are not always clear about exactly what they need to do to improve their teaching.
- The current headteacher provides caring and visionary leadership. In a very short time she has built a strong leadership team which is fully committed to her clear direction for improvement. The headteacher is determined to address all weaknesses, raise expectations and raise attainment. All staff support her resolve.
- Leaders acknowledge that the work of leaders with particular responsibilities is not well developed. The school's evaluation of its provision and outcomes lacks rigour and precision. Consequently, the school's plans for the future do not contain actions which are sufficiently focused or sharp enough to bring about improvements quickly. Plans do not include clear targets and milestones so that leaders can measure how effective their actions have been.
- The school promotes and checks that all pupils have equality of opportunity. For example, additional income received by the school to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium is used to ensure they achieve equally well in school.
- The curriculum captures pupils' interests. It is enriched by a wide range of musical and sporting activities, visits and visitors. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills to problem-solving activities or use their writing skills in subjects other

than English.

- The local authority and current headteacher have worked in partnership to coordinate a range of support for staff. This is beginning to improve the quality of teaching and strengthen leadership. The local authority linked the school with a National Leader of Education in order to help the school continue improving but it is too early to evaluate the success of this initiative.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Displays celebrate pupils' art work, pupils cooperate and collaborate well together and the quality and enthusiasm of their singing is a joy. Assemblies provide good opportunities to further promote pupils' spiritual development and for pupils to consider how to support one another.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are fully committed to seeing the school improve. They are aware of school priorities and their visits to the school are becoming more focused on increasing their awareness of the quality of teaching and how it is linked to the progress of different groups of pupils. This is because they are now gaining a more accurate overview of the school's work. They are fully aware of how the pupil premium funding is spent and of the improving outcomes for this group of pupils. Governors understand fully that performance management must support improvement in the quality of teaching and be related to any increases in pay. They ensure that all statutory responsibilities including budgetary and safeguarding meet requirements.

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	118048
Local authority	City of Kingston upon Hull
Inspection number	401721

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon Michael Loughlin
Headteacher	Mrs Maureen Hulme
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2010
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