

# St Catherine's RC Primary School

Greystoke Gardens, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE2 1PS

**Inspection dates** 5–6 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent across school. In some lessons, the pace of learning is too slow.
- Attainment in mathematics is below average at the end of Year 6 for all pupils and in English for those pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium.
- Pupils have too few opportunities, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to apply their mathematical skills in real-life situations. Work in mathematics does not always become harder as pupils go through the year, so progress is slowed.
- There is a group of pupils whose attendance is too low despite frequent reminders and communication from the school.
- Pupils have too few chances to write at length in English and other subjects.
- In some instances, when teachers mark work, they do not make it clear to pupils how to make their work better next time or allow time for pupils to act upon advice given.
- While the headteacher and governing body have a clear view of the quality of teaching in the school, areas for improvement for teachers are not followed up rigorously enough.
- Senior and middle leaders are not yet fully accountable for pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility and do not make sure that the school's plans for improvement are applied consistently.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school provides exceptionally well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and, in some lessons outstanding. Pupils from a wide range of cultural backgrounds play and learn happily together; they say they feel extremely safe. Attendance is improving.
- The headteacher and the governing body have a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are determined to improve the school further. This is an improving school.
- Areas of weak teaching have been removed. There is much good and some outstanding teaching. Progress in all subjects is now at least in line with expectations.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors had meetings with staff, groups of pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors. The inspector also spoke to the school's local authority Achievement Partner.
- The inspectors looked at a range of evidence including, the school's improvement plan; the school's data relating to pupils' progress; monitoring reports; the work pupils were doing in their books and the school's documentation relating to safeguarding.
- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 10 lessons taught by nine teachers and listened to a group of pupils read. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- The headteacher conducted three joint observations of lessons with the inspectors. The inspectors also observed the headteacher reporting back to teachers on their findings regarding the quality of learning and pupils' achievement in lessons.
- The inspectors took into account the 13 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also spoke to parents and analysed the school's own questionnaire of parents' views.
- Eleven staff completed questionnaires and the responses were analysed.

## Inspection team

Gordon Potter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Wendy Richardson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average sized primary school.
- Half the pupils are of White British heritage. The other half is made up of pupils from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, most of whom speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and those from military service families) is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- There is a breakfast club as well as many lunch-time and after-school clubs which are managed by the headteacher and run voluntarily by staff.
- Many more pupils than is the case across the country leave or join the school at other than the usual times.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, to further increase pupils' progress and attainment, particularly in mathematics for all pupils and in writing for those pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, by:
  - sharing the good and outstanding practice that is in the school already
  - offering children in the Early Years Foundation Stage more opportunities to practise their skills in counting and recognising numbers in exciting, real-life situations and to develop their creative skills
  - improving the curriculum in mathematics so that work becomes harder as pupils grow older and so that it offers more interesting opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in solving problems related to everyday life
  - offering pupils even more opportunities to write at length in English and in other subjects
  - ensuring that all teachers mark work for pupils in a way that helps pupils to do better next time and allows them time to act upon that advice
  - ensuring lessons have a brisk pace which allows pupils time to practise and apply the skills they are learning.
- Increase the impact that leaders at all levels have on pupils' attainment and progress and accelerate the rate at which the school is improving, by:
  - using lesson observations more robustly to ensure that areas for improvement are followed up by teachers and form the basis of the next review of their teaching
  - improving the skills of senior and middle leaders through effective use of training to help them continue to improve and offering them even greater accountability for pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility and the consistent application of the school's plans for improvement.
- Further improve pupils' attendance and punctuality by working closely with families whose children are not attending school regularly nor arrive on time.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Most children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are in line with those typically expected for their age, although the proportion of children whose skills are lower than expected has increased in the last two years.
- While there is some good teaching, including some excellent development of children's spiritual awareness in the Reception class, children's attainment is average when they enter Year 1. However, skills are below average when they enter Year 1 in their understanding of shape, space and measure and calculation, and in their creative development. There are too few chances for children to practise their counting and develop their understanding of numbers in exciting, real-life situations.
- Pupils continue to make expected progress in Key Stage 1 and their attainment at the end of Year 2 is average in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' attainment is typically average in the Year 6 national tests. In 2012, attainment in mathematics was below average. While pupils had made expected progress in English, with some pupils making excellent progress in writing, progress in mathematics was inadequate. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are now making expected progress in mathematics and pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to gain average attainment.
- Inspection evidence and the school's records show that progress in reading is now good. This is as a result of good teaching of how to link letters and sounds (phonics) to help pupils read words with which they are unfamiliar, and a drive to help pupils enjoy books and read more in school and at home.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make expected progress from their starting points. This is as a result of the well-targeted support and teaching they receive from teaching assistants and teachers.
- By the end of Year 6, the attainment of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics and below other pupils in the school by one year in mathematics and one and a half years in English. While these pupils made more progress than other pupils in mathematics, the school is very well aware that the progress of all pupils in mathematics has been too slow.
- At the end of Year 2, pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium attain more highly than other pupils in the school and across the country in mathematics. They are half a year ahead of other pupils in the school. In English, they are one term behind other pupils in the school in reading and writing. As a result of efforts by the school to improve the quality of teaching, the gap is closing for these pupils. Indeed, across all subjects, they attain as highly as other pupils in the school.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress from their starting points, as a result of the school's clear understanding of their needs and how to help them progress quickly in reading and speaking and listening.
- Those pupils who leave and join the school at other than the usual times make expected progress. However, amongst this group, those pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Much is good and, on occasion, outstanding, but elsewhere the pace of learning is often too slow. Teachers are skilful at asking questions that encourage pupils to think hard and develop their ideas. They make it clear to pupils what they will learn and show them the skills they will need to use. However, this limits opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves or to practise their skills, especially in mathematics.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked and this marking helpfully tells pupils how successful they have

been in their work. However, advice about how to improve their work is inconsistent and pupils are not given time to act upon that advice.

- While the curriculum is planned to offer many opportunities for pupils to develop their mental mathematics and calculation skills, it offers too few opportunities to practise their mathematics skills in real life problem-solving activities. In some classes, pupils repeat work they have already learned and they are stopped from moving on quickly enough.
- Pupils' written work shows that pupils make expected progress in writing. Some pupils have excellent writing skills but all pupils do not write at length often enough to make consistently good progress. Pupils write a good amount in religious education and history and there are examples of pupils writing stories, but they do not do this frequently.
- While there are good examples of teachers making sure that work set is at the right level and with the right amount of interest, they do not all consistently plan work well enough to get the best out of all pupils. In an English lesson, for example, pupils had to read and analyse scripts for television programmes. The teacher spent too long introducing the topic. Some pupils lost interest and the teacher did not change the work when she realised this.
- In the follow-up lesson, the teacher acted upon the inspector's feedback and planned a lesson which was based on work in which pupils were interested. She skilfully helped pupils to see how subjects link together. She showed a well-chosen television clip and pupils worked together planning a script. Pupils found the work more interesting and they made rapid progress.
- Where teaching is good and outstanding, teachers make sure pupils learn quickly. In an outstanding mathematics lesson for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6, the teacher asked questions which challenged pupils to think hard. They were given work which was hard enough for them and the teacher skilfully checked their learning as the lesson proceeded. The teaching assistant made an excellent contribution to pupils' learning. Their behaviour was excellent because pupils fully enjoyed what they were learning and they made excellent progress.
- A strategy that is improving reading and writing is to use stories to give pupils ideas for writing. For example, pupils in Year 6 read the *Street Child* to explore what life was like for children in the Victorian age and subsequently wrote about their feelings and experiences.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils say that behaviour is good in lessons and any minor misbehaviour is quickly dealt with by their teachers. Inspectors' analysis of the school's records of behaviour show behaviour is consistently good. Indeed, much excellent behaviour was evident in lessons and around the school.
- There is a consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour across the school, and managers have worked robustly to put in place. There are systems of sanctions and rewards and staff have clear expectations of pupils which help them to have a very clear understanding of how to behave well.
- The needs of a very small number of pupils who have significant behavioural difficulties are very well managed by the school. As a result, there have been no permanent exclusions in recent years.
- Pupils appreciate the way the 'check-in: check-out' programme gives them the confidence to talk about their feelings and any worries they may have. As a result, pupils feel very safe and are aware of different forms of bullying, including racism. They are very clear that any form of bullying is extremely rare and when it does happen they are confident that it will be quickly dealt with by 'playground buddies' or adults.
- They are very polite to adults, keen to talk about their school and respect one another. Indeed pupils from a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds play well and happily together.
- Pupils develop social skills well in the safe, well-managed and lively breakfast and after-school clubs, as well as through the responsibilities they have in school, including that of house captains. They particularly like the house system which offers points as a reward for excellent behaviour, work, and for helping others.

- The school council is helping to develop the school's website and offers ideas to improve the toilets and the playground. They are proud of their involvement in interviewing new teachers. However, they say that, whether they are on the school council or not, 'everyone has a say'.
- As a result of the school's clear initiatives to work with families and encourage pupils to attend regularly and on time, the number of persistent absentees has reduced and attendance has improved and is now average. The school is well aware, though, that attendance should be higher. There are still pupils whose attendance and punctuality are not good enough.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- The headteacher cares deeply for the pupils in the school and is strongly committed to raising their attainment and improving the quality of teaching. Together with the governing body and other leaders, he is clear about what needs to be done to improve the school and his view of the school's performance is extremely rigorous and accurate.
- He has a very accurate understanding of what makes good teaching and has helped teachers come to a clear view of how their teaching can be improved. In lesson observations, he checks how much progress pupils are making and makes judgements about teaching clear when he gives feedback to teachers. Training provided for teachers to help them to continue to improve their skills is beginning to be successful.
- However, teaching requires improvement because the headteacher does not always check that areas for development are put into practice. While other leaders in school share good practice, their skills in judging the quality of teaching are not yet fully developed.
- The school has worked diligently to improve the quality of the work of subject leaders. They are becoming more confident in planning improvements and linking subject planning into whole-school plans. There is clear evidence of success in the development of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and improvements in pupils' reading and writing. The mathematics leader is an excellent teacher and new strategies for teaching mathematics are beginning to help pupils make faster progress. However, leaders are not yet fully accountable for pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility and some policies are not yet used consistently. As a result, teaching remains inconsistent in quality across the school.
- The school has very rigorous processes to measure pupils' progress. Leaders clearly focus on how many pupils have made more than expected progress. This has helped many pupils make good progress in their reading and writing. It is now beginning to increase the rates of progress in mathematics and for those pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium. While this shows the school's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination, their achievement, while improving, remains lower than other pupils in the school.
- The performance management of staff has been improved so that it is clearly focussed on raising pupils' attainment and improving the quality of teaching. There is now a strong link between the performance of teachers and their pay progression and staff are very clear about this. The school has rigorously applied this policy in the past year and as a result, the quality of teaching has improved. However, the school acknowledges that in the past, this has not been the approach.
- At its best, the curriculum is inspiring and includes activities which excite pupils and help them gain a deep understanding of history and religious education. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, and to appreciate the wonderful things, such as music, art and literature that humans have created.
- The local authority has provided very strong support to the school. The Achievement Partner offers very rigorous and clear advice and has helped leaders and managers to come to a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The local authority has supported the school in its drive to improve reading and mathematics and the quality of teaching.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has taken external advice and undergone training to improve its effectiveness. This has been largely successful and governors are now very focussed on improving pupils' attainment, progress and the quality of teaching. They have developed clear systems to check on lessons; they clearly know how the pupil premium funding is allocated and monitor its impact. Together with the headteacher, governors have taken action to improve teaching and to establish a staff team who include good and outstanding teachers, whose performance is assessed and whose training needs are met. However, the governing body is aware that teaching requires improvement and is determined to improve it further. The governing body ensures that statutory responsibilities for safeguarding are met and ensures that staff are trained appropriately to keep pupils safe and free from harm, as well as to improve their teaching skills.
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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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	108507
<b>Local authority</b>	Newcastle upon Tyne
<b>Inspection number</b>	400986

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	230
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Fr Colin Carr
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michael Ewing
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 2326803
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