

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School

Fordbridge Road, Kingshurst, Birmingham, B37 6LW

Inspection dates

14–15 March 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

- Teaching requires improvement. Although it has improved recently, it is not consistently good.
- Some teachers do not expect enough from pupils in lessons, so too few pupils make good progress in either English or mathematics.
- Teachers do not provide enough time for pupils to respond to their marking so that they can improve their work.
- Subject leaders do not oversee the effectiveness of teaching and achievement in their subjects sufficiently well, or quickly identify any individual pupils who may have fallen behind in their work.
- The targets senior leaders set for teachers to improve their skills are not tightly focused on the improvements needed, or checked regularly to make sure teachers have responded to them.
- Governors support the school but do not get enough information to enable them to ask the right questions to challenge leaders about the school's performance.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils enjoy and do well in reading.
- Children in the nursery and Reception classes make good progress and learn in exciting ways.
- Attendance is above average.
- Pupils feel safe and their behaviour is good. They are polite, cooperate well with adults and always try their best.
- The new headteacher has accurately identified where the school needs to improve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, of which 11 were joint observations with the school's senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to classrooms to observe pupils, their work and other activities after school, at lunchtime and in the playground.
- Meetings were held with two different groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, school staff, including the leaders in charge of English, mathematics and special educational needs, and a representative of the local authority.
- There were not enough responses from parents or carers on the Parent View website to indicate parents' satisfaction with the school, but a recent school survey of parents taken this term was analysed.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked carefully at numerous documents, including checks on teaching, reports for governors' meetings, information relating to support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable and pupils supported by the pupil premium, and policies and records relating to pupils' achievement, attendance, punctuality, behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also reviewed the safeguarding arrangements in the school.

Inspection team

David Cousins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mary Hinds

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average primary school.
- More pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals than in most schools. These pupils, together with a few pupils who are looked after by the local authority, are supported by additional government funding through the pupil premium.
- Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. Fewer than average are from minority ethnic groups and/or speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is much higher than average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- There have been major recent changes in the leadership of the school. A new headteacher started at the school in January 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching so that pupils make better progress in English and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - teachers regularly check how well pupils are doing in lessons, and adjust lesson activities in response to extend pupils' understanding and increase their progress
 - pupils are clear about their targets and have time in lessons to respond to the teachers' marking so that their work improves
 - each lesson builds on the pupils' previous learning, and tasks are planned at the right level of difficulty to get the most from pupils of all abilities.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders, managers and governors by making sure that:
 - subject leaders develop a clear understanding of pupils' performance and the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility, so that they can play a full role in bringing about improvements
 - the targets to improve teachers' performance are linked to measurable increases in pupils' progress
 - teachers receive personalised training and support to strengthen specific aspects of their teaching that have been identified as in need of improvement
 - governors systematically review data on pupils' achievement and collect first-hand evidence of how well the school is doing, so they can make sure leaders identify the right priorities for improvement and hold leaders at all levels to account for the school's performance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because despite recent improvements, too few pupils make good progress, particularly in mathematics. This is because teachers do not always demand enough from pupils in lessons, and the school has only recently begun to identify precisely where pupils have not made enough progress.
- Children start in the nursery class with levels of skill which are below those expected for their age. Due to good teaching and effective relationships with adults, children make good progress.
- This improvement is continued in the Reception class, where exciting learning activities and effective adult support ensure that children develop their understanding and skills well. Children's writing skills are effectively improved because adults encourage children to attempt work that is often demanding for their age.
- In 2012, results at the end of Year 6 were below average in English and mathematics. However, standards have improved this year and are now average. More-able pupils attain average standards but are capable of more.
- Boys now make the same progress as girls. Recent changes in the work planned means that they are now making adequate progress in writing and mathematics. In Year 5 for example, an active session on Greek pottery encouraged them to move around the classroom, talk about their pieces of evidence and then write about this effectively. In Year 1 the imaginative use of a computerised whiteboard ensured boys were engaged in talking about and writing large numbers enthusiastically.
- Most pupils make good progress in learning to read. The books pupils read are checked regularly. More-able readers use good skills to read unfamiliar words such as 'nocturnal' because the school teaches children the sounds letters make (phonics) well. Pupils enjoy a wide range of books and talk enthusiastically about the ones they like. One said, 'I like reading and my favourite book is *Fantastic Fish* by Emma Lynch.'
- The 2012 Year 6 test results showed that pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium were two terms behind those who did not receive this funding in English, and in mathematics this gap was over three terms. While pupils eligible for the pupil premium who are currently in the school still do not attain as well as all other pupils, the gap is narrowing. They now make better progress because the school spends the funding on more one-to-one support and additional learning resources for group work so they can catch up.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make appropriate progress. The school has recently changed the way progress information is used to plan work and support for individual pupils. This means that teachers are clearer about the progress pupils need to make.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although there is some good teaching in the school, too much requires improvement or has in the past been inadequate. While teaching has recently improved considerably, this has not yet had a marked impact on pupils' learning and progress.

- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and frequently, but pupils do not always know enough about their targets. Teachers make detailed comments in their marking, but do not give pupils sufficient planned opportunities to respond with written replies or to follow up the guidance on how to improve their work.
- During lessons, teachers do not check pupils' progress frequently enough to see how well they understand what they are being taught, or adapt activities to ensure that pupils make more rapid progress. As a result some pupils sometimes find the work too easy. In some lessons, teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve are too low.
- Teaching in mathematics is improving. Pupils say they enjoy these lessons because activities are applied to 'real life' situations. For example, pupils calculated in a lesson on perimeters how much electric fencing would be needed to surround the school to 'keep them in!' However, in some lessons the work pupils do does not always build on their previous knowledge, and activities do not regularly challenge pupils to reach the highest levels they are capable of.
- The best teaching reflects an increased understanding of the way different groups learn, and provides more challenging and faster-paced sessions which encourage pupils to learn well. In these sessions teachers' good subject knowledge is an important reason why pupils' work is improving. For example, pupils in Year 6 were encouraged to reach higher levels in their persuasive writing due to the teacher's very clear understanding of the higher levels in English, which meant that rhetorical questions were a feature of most of the writing.
- Reading is given a high priority across the school. The teaching of phonics is effective, so by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are confident readers. This means older pupils enjoy reading and talk with enthusiasm about the range of books they have read.
- In the nursery and Reception, children enjoy a good range of activities. Teachers and other adults plan opportunities in response to children's interests, and develop their use of language skilfully. Children work well together in groups and listen to each other's idea carefully. There is a good balance between activities guided by adults and those children select for themselves. This helps to develop their independent learning skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' enjoyment of school means they attend regularly and are on time for lessons. The school has worked well with parents to improve this. Every opportunity is used to celebrate the attendance of pupils and whole classes, to make sure everyone knows how important it is to be in school.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and at times, such as in assembly and where teaching captures their imagination, it can be exceptional. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other, the staff and visitors to the school, and this leads to a calm atmosphere in which pupils are happy.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their lessons. They work well together and are happy to talk about their learning and share their ideas with each other.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school, and they learn how to stay safe in their community and online when using the internet. They know and understand the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and are confident that any concerns that they report are managed quickly and effectively by staff.

- A recent school questionnaire shows that parents are happy with the school, feel their children are safe and say that the new headteacher is making a difference. The school supports parents well by, for example, providing e-safety sessions for parents so that they can keep their children safe when online and understand what the school is teaching their children in this area.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership requires improvement because, until recently, the actions taken by leaders and managers have not had a strong enough impact on improving the quality of teaching. As a result, rates of progress between classes and some groups of pupils have been inconsistent.
- Subject leaders make checks on the quality of teaching through visiting classrooms and checking on pupils' books. However, they do not pay enough attention to whether pupils are making sufficient progress.
- Procedures for checking the work of the school, such as looking at pupils' books, observing teaching and analysing pupil progress information, have recently been sharpened. In the past these procedures were not used systematically to inform senior leaders and governors whether or not their actions for improvement have been successful in all classes, and this has restricted the progress of some pupils still in the school.
- The headteacher and another senior leader have identified the right areas for improvement and included these into the school development plan. There are early signs that both teaching and standards are improving, and that the school has the capacity to improve further.
- The systems for managing the performance and training of teachers have not been effective in improving the teaching of individual teachers. Targets to improve teaching are not sufficiently focused upon the achievement of pupils to ensure better outcomes.
- The school supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils have appropriate opportunities to take part in a range of events such as after-school clubs, educational visits and visitors. Other focused activities, for example a science week, make learning more enjoyable.
- The local authority has provided appropriate support to help strengthen the leadership of the school and its governors in appointing an effective new headteacher.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well trained and increasingly hold the school to account. However, they rely too much on the information provided by leaders. Their lack of first-hand knowledge about the school's performance means they are not able to judge the school's effectiveness independently. They are, however, aware that there is more to be done to accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment. They have a suitable understanding of how strong the quality of teaching is and what is being done to improve it, and are keen that the school should relate any pay rises to evidence of impact on pupils' achievement. Governors know how the pupil premium is spent and are beginning to evaluate its impact. They ensure that all safeguarding arrangements meet national 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	104103
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	404925

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	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angela Moseley
Headteacher	Cieran Flaherty
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2010
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