

St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School

Wexham Road, Slough, SL2 5QR

Inspection dates

5–6 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Pupils' achievement is inadequate because there is too much weak teaching.
- Pupils' standards at the end of Year 6 are too low in reading, writing and mathematics because they are not taught at the right levels and so do not make the progress they should.
- More able pupils do not make enough progress because they are not challenged in lessons. Teachers do not ask questions well enough to assess these pupils' understanding and extend their learning.
- Pupils lose interest when teachers talk for too long, especially during lesson introductions.
- Pupils' writing does not improve quickly because they do not write long enough pieces of work in different subjects.
- Pupils seldom use their mathematics skills to work out real-life problems.
- School leaders' management of teachers' performance has not led to improvements in teaching. Teachers in charge of subjects are not all playing their part in checking on and improving teaching.
- Leaders have not made thorough checks on how well groups of pupils are progressing.
- The school's leaders have not made sure that their action plans prioritise improving teaching and pupils' progress nor identified how checks can be made to be sure plans are working.
- The previous governing body did not demand improvement strongly enough, nor provide sufficient levels of support.
- The school does not have a permanent leader and there is not enough evidence to demonstrate that recent improvements will be sustained.

The school has the following strengths

- The interim headteacher is providing strong leadership.
- Attendance has improved significantly and is now above the national average.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage due to good teaching.
- Pupils get along well together and have a strong appreciation of cultural and spiritual differences and beliefs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons. Seven lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with the interim headteacher, other senior leaders, the Chair and another member of the interim executive board and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, looked at work in pupils’ books, observed the start of the day and an assembly and met with two groups of pupils.
- Inspectors took into account the 12 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire. They also spoke to parents at the start and end of the school day.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including minutes of governing body meetings, the school improvement plan, information on pupils’ progress and attainment, safeguarding documentation, attendance data and behaviour records.
- Inspectors analysed the responses from the staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Adam Hewett, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lynne Kauffman	Additional Inspector
Gill Walley	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Newly qualified teachers should not be appointed.

Information about this school

- This school is much larger than an average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and pupils with a parent in the armed forces) is below average. There are no children from that last group in the school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs, with a specialist teacher for pupils with speech and language difficulties. Currently, there are four pupils who receive this additional support.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- An interim headteacher took up her post in November 2012.
- An interim executive board replaced the governing body in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of good or better teaching and eliminate inadequate teaching by ensuring that teachers:
 - provide clear guidance to pupils on what they need to do to improve
 - expect more of pupils, especially the more able, for example through probing questions
 - give pupils work that is well matched to their ability
 - observe and learn from the good practice that exists in some classes and in other schools
 - use time effectively in all lessons to allow pupils to apply the skills they have been taught.
 - Improve progress in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - there are frequent opportunities for pupils to write at greater length and improve their writing skills across a range of subjects
 - pupils use and apply their mathematics skills solving day-to-day problems
 - leaders keep a close check on pupils' progress and take action where there are gaps between the progress of different groups of pupils.
 - Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - fully implementing an improvement plan that focuses sharply on improving teaching and achievement and clearly identifies measures of success
 - ensuring performance management is used effectively to bring about improvements in teaching
 - providing an effective whole-school approach to checking teaching and learning and making sure all school leaders have the necessary skills to do this
 - ensuring all senior leaders contribute effectively to achieving improvements.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils do not make sufficient progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Although they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage with average standards, by the time they reach the end of Year 2 they have lost ground. Pupils' standards are below those found nationally in reading and mathematics and significantly below in writing at the end of Year 2.
- By the time they leave in Year 6 pupils' attainment is below the national average, and is significantly below in writing. Attainment and progress have been low since the previous inspection. Pupils are not making adequate progress across the year groups due to inadequate teaching.
- Some groups of pupils make less progress than others. These include pupils who speak English as an additional language, and pupils from Black African and Pakistani backgrounds. Until very recently the progress of different groups within the school has not been rigorously checked and information about how well pupils are doing has not been used to help with planning to boost their progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs made less progress than others in 2011 and 2012. However, this group of pupils currently in the school is doing better because they are receiving the right support.
- The small numbers of pupils with a statement of special educational needs who receive additional specialist support for their speech and language difficulties make good progress across the school. Their learning is well managed.
- More able pupils are not making adequate progress because the work set for them is not hard enough. Ability setting has very recently been introduced for different groups but as yet this is not having a positive impact on improving the progress made by the more able pupils, particularly in writing.
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals made similar progress to other pupils in school last year. By the end of Year 6 they attained the same standards in English as other pupils, and in mathematics they were ahead by about a term. Those in the care of the local authority made similar progress in English but good progress in mathematics. They reached similar standards to others in English, but were about five terms ahead in mathematics. However, the progress of these pupils, until very recently, has not been checked, and the additional funding that is available to the school has not been used specifically to support their learning.
- Progress in English has been below that found nationally. Very recently the school introduced a structured approach to learning the links between letters and the sounds they represent (phonics), and there are early signs that this is starting to increase their pace of learning.
- When children start in Nursery most have skills and abilities below what is typical for their age, particularly in communication and personal and social skills. Children make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage and by the time they move into Year 1 their attainment is in line with that found nationally. This is due to well-planned activities and high expectations of what they can achieve. Many of the children start school speaking little or no English; due to good support they make good progress in their communication skills by the end of the Reception year.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Weaknesses in teaching in both Key Stages 1 and 2 mean that pupils make inadequate progress. During the inspection the majority of teaching seen either required improvement or was inadequate. A minority of the lessons seen were good.
- Teaching in the lessons that are not good is not successful because of one or more of these factors:
 - teachers do not plan lessons that build on what pupils already know and can do
 - all the pupils were expected to undertake the same work and this meant that it was too

difficult for some pupils and too easy for others

- guidance to pupils through marking did not give enough indication of how they could improve or develop their work
 - teachers spent too much time talking and this meant that there was not enough time for pupils to work on their own
 - teachers did not involve pupils in discussions to gain an understanding of what they knew and questions were not adapted to the needs of individuals.
- In the few lessons where the quality of teaching is good, teachers know pupils well. They adapt their plans based on accurate assessments of what has been achieved, and set tasks that are appropriate to different abilities. They encourage pupils to work together either in pairs or in small groups to discuss their work and to solve problems together. They set very clear expectations of what should be achieved within lessons and what standards are required.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage teaching is effective in helping children to play, explore and be active in communicating and thinking. Very good use is made of support staff to lead and support learning. There is a strong focus on developing children's spoken language and this is then used to develop their reading through the teaching of the sounds that make up words.
- The interim headteacher is using checks on the quality of teaching to identify where good practice exists and is providing support to develop the skills of all staff. This is apparent in the recent training for all teachers in the successful systematic teaching of phonics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- In lessons where the work set for pupils is not well matched to their abilities or where the teacher spends too much time talking, pupils gradually lose interest about what is being said and become restless. This adversely affects their progress. Where teaching is good, pupils are well behaved and show good levels of concentration.
- Pupils are generally friendly, welcoming and keen to learn. Relationships between pupils are good and they show respect for each other's beliefs and values. They respond well to staff and appreciate the support that is provided for them.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are usually positive and they try to do their best in the work that they undertake.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and feel that the school deals well with it when it occurs. Some pupils spoke of isolated incidents but a scrutiny of records shows that the school has good procedures for dealing with any incidents and takes action to stop them occurring again. A small number of parents expressed the view during the inspection that bullying was not well dealt with, but the majority of parents who responded on Parent View felt that the school deals effectively with bullying.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and are taught how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when using the internet.
- Attendance has improved significantly during the past 18 months and is now above the national average. This is due to the measures that the school has taken to promote good attendance.

The leadership and management

are inadequate

- Leadership and management at all levels have been inadequate since the last inspection. Leaders and managers have not given enough attention to improving teaching and increasing the rates of pupils' progress. Key areas for improvement identified in the last inspection have not been addressed.
- The school has not been accurate in its evaluation of its own performance. This is due to a lack of effective checks on teaching and insufficient analysis of the achievement of different groups of pupils.
- There has been too little emphasis on developing school leaders' skills in checking on the strength of teaching and this has contributed to the low attainment and inadequate teaching.

- Performance management has not been used effectively. The interim headteacher has acted quickly to bring about changes but it is too early to see a sustained impact on pupils' learning. Teachers have not had enough opportunities to observe good teaching so that they can apply effective methods to their own lessons.
 - The local authority's intervention in bringing in an interim executive board to replace the former governing body has been a positive move in addressing the inadequacy of leadership and governance. However, the school's weaknesses have been apparent since the last inspection and were not dealt with soon enough.
 - Although the interim arrangements for leadership are a step in the right direction, the lack of permanent leadership and the associated lack of a structure of accountability mean improvements are fragile.
 - Planning for improvement has not been effective enough. Plans do not identify the key areas that the school needs to address to improve pupils' achievement. This is because there has not been enough focus on improving teaching or on setting high enough expectations. Action plans have not identified specific goals to help the school evaluate whether sufficient improvement is being made.
 - There is a commitment to promoting equality of opportunity for all. However, too many groups within school, including pupils from different ethnic groups and pupils who speak English as an additional language, do not receive sufficient help when they fall behind. Those who need it do not always receive appropriate support and teaching is not adapted to pupils' individual needs. This has prevented many pupils from making progress in line with similar pupils nationally.
 - The range and contents of subjects taught do not fully meet the needs of all learners. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use and develop skills that they have learnt in writing in other subjects. Mathematics skills are not always used in practical contexts so that pupils learn to use and apply what they have learnt. Development work has started recently to produce a teaching programme that captures pupils' interest and is relevant to their needs. This is not yet fully set up and has not yet had sufficient impact. There is a number of sporting and musical opportunities for pupils, which they appreciate.
 - The school places a good emphasis on promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies allow pupils to reflect on the beliefs of others. There are links with other local faiths and religions that help pupils appreciate the multi-faith society in which they live.
 - Until recently the school did not monitor how the funds available to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium were used. A greater emphasis is now being placed on ensuring that the funding provides additional support that will ensure they make good progress.
 - Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. All appropriate policies and training are in place to keep pupils safe.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The interim executive board has the experience and expertise to provide effective support to the school's leaders. Its members are fulfilling their responsibilities to ensure pupils and staff are kept safe. The board has taken effective action to improve how it receives information about the school's effectiveness. For example, by implementing a system of regular reviews of pupils' performance it now regularly checks on the progress pupils are making. This gives the board a sufficient understanding of the impact of actions taken to use the pupil premium to accelerate the progress for those pupils for whom it is intended. It has compared the school's performance with that of others and has contributed to drawing up a strategic plan to address underachievement. The action plan has shortcomings in terms of its capacity to deal with endemic weaknesses in teaching. The board has familiarised itself with the school's performance management process and recognises that it is not yet fit for purpose. The interim executive board is beginning to address these problems but is at an early stage in the journey.
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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	110039
Local authority	Slough
Inspection number	401098

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	464
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Italo Caffola
Headteacher	Margaret Dickinson - Interim Headteacher
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 July 2010
Telephone number	01753 522048
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