

Saint Clare's Primary School A Catholic Voluntary Academy, Coalville, Leicestershire

Convent Drive, Coalville, LE67 3SF

Inspection dates 18–19 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well because teaching is typically good and occasionally outstanding. The school caters consistently well for the more-able pupils and those who have particular learning difficulties.
- Children in Reception make good progress, particularly in developing their communication and language skills. Staff constantly promote good speaking skills and teach phonics (linking letters and sounds) exceptionally well.
- Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe.
- Attendance is above average.
- The new headteacher is supported by a well-established senior leadership team, who identify the right priorities for improvement by regularly and rigorously checking on teaching and pupils' progress.
- This has already led to higher standards in English, and their current focus on raising the quality of teaching in mathematics is beginning to have an impact.
- Governors are keen to help the school to improve and many frequently attend training sessions. Their regular visits ensure that they know how well the school is performing.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in mathematics is not yet as good as in English. Work in lessons is not always hard enough, particularly for those of lower and middle ability, and pupils do not get enough chance to develop their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- In Reception, teachers' planning does not give equal importance to the different areas of learning, and does not always link the skills promoted indoors to outdoor activities so that children can rapidly develop them.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons led by eight different teachers in. Three of these lessons were seen together with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the pupil council, a group of six Year 5 and 6 pupils, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team.
- A discussion took place with a Director of the Blessed Cyprian Tansi Trust, to which the school belongs, about the support and advice available to the school.
- There were 46 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) by the end of the inspection. The inspectors took account of these and also sought the views of parents and carers as they arrived at school with their children.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' recent and current progress, planning for school improvement, and records of governing body meetings, checks on teaching and behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Joseph Peacock, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janis Warren

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils come from a wide area of this former mining community.
- There is one class for each year group from Reception to Year 6.
- The proportions of minority ethnic pupils and those who speak English as an additional language are both below average. Most speak English fluently.
- The proportion of pupils supported by additional government funding through the pupil premium is well below average. In this school, it only applies to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion who are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school converted to academy status on the first of July 2012. The school is part of a multi-academy trust with four other primary schools and a secondary school. The predecessor school, St Clare's Catholic Primary School, was judged to be good when it was last inspected by Ofsted.
- A new headteacher started in January 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching outstanding and raise achievement, especially in mathematics, by:
 - frequently checking the quality of learning in lessons to make sure that the tasks given to all pupils, especially those of lower and middle ability, are demanding enough to rapidly increase their rate of progress
 - giving pupils more opportunities to develop their mathematical skills when doing work in other subjects.
- Refine lesson planning in Reception to improve the balance between the different areas of learning, and to make closer links between new learning and skills in activities in the classroom and outdoors.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills and understanding that are below those typical for their age, and well below in their personal, social and emotional skills, along with communication and language. Staff are caring and supportive, helping children to settle quickly and enjoy school, and they make good overall progress.
- Children make excellent progress in learning letters and their sounds (phonics) due to the effective arrangements for the teaching of this key skill. Some were seen writing simple words with chalk on the ground outdoors, for example. The school's records show that children are making rapid progress in developing their early reading and writing skills.
- Children work well together both indoors and out, developing their social skills. Boys particularly enjoyed playing together with farm vehicles following their visit to a farm the day before. Staff sometimes miss opportunities to plan activities outdoors that further develop or consolidate skills being promoted indoors. This slows children's progress in gaining key skills, such as those in mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 because teaching is usually good. The school has focused successfully on raising standards in English, particularly to ensure the increasing number of minority ethnic pupils and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported and do well. It is now rightly shifting the focus to mathematics.
- Attainment and progress in reading and writing are good. Pupils make good use of modern technology to research information about different countries or write poems using powerful imagery. All have good opportunities to write in subject areas and topics such as French and 'Sounds of Africa'.
- Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in reading because of the strong emphasis placed on learning phonic skills and encouraging reading. This gives pupils, including the few who speak English as an additional language, good strategies for reading and spelling words. Parents often listen to their children read, and this too is helping to raise standards.
- Most pupils are making good progress in mathematics, but the recently introduced improvements such as a revised calculation policy are not yet having a full impact. Occasionally, tasks are not sufficiently challenging because teachers do not demand enough from the pupils. In one lesson, for example, some pupils found the work easy and finished early but were not provided with additional, more demanding tasks.
- The pupils affected are generally those of lower or middle ability, but the few disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in mathematics and particularly in English. The expertise of some highly skilled teaching assistants, who work closely with individuals or small groups in lessons, is making sure that all achieve well.
- The school uses the small amount of additional funding well to provide individual help for the very few pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, and school records show that this helps to improve their attainment in English and mathematics. Not enough pupils were known to be eligible for free school meals in 2012 to comment on their attainment in national tests without identifying them.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is usually good, and it is sometimes outstanding in Years 5 and 6. Typical features include effective planning which provides tasks that are matched to the ability of pupils and interesting, often practical work with pupils working independently and using computers.
- In the two lessons where teaching was outstanding, teaching ensured that learning was challenging and fun. Pupils enjoyed looking for patterns when working out how many batteries they could buy and creating their own poems about Mum as an inanimate object! One, described as a steamroller, caused much mirth!
- In Reception, the current planning format makes it difficult to check that all areas of learning are given equal emphasis. It was not clear, for example, that developing mathematics skills has the same emphasis as in the other classes. Links between indoor and outdoor learning are not always made clear, limiting the opportunities for children to develop new skills at a quicker pace.
- Teachers make frequent and accurate checks on pupils' rates of progress in English, so any pupils in danger of falling behind are quickly identified and supported. The same attention is now being applied to pupils' performance in mathematics in order to raise standards.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because their individual learning needs are recognised and catered for well in teachers' lesson planning. The high level of skill demonstrated by a teaching assistant in a Year 5 lesson ensured pupils found a pattern for their calculation and were able to explain it to others.
- Marking is thorough and usually gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve punctuation and the content of their written work. Reading is taught well with pupils building effectively on their phonic knowledge to spell words correctly.
- In mathematics, progress is limited when teachers do not plan sufficiently challenging tasks that build on pupils' previous learning, and they do not make the most of opportunities that arise in different subjects for pupils to practise their mathematical skills. Most of the more-able pupils are appropriately challenged. Other pupils occasionally find work too easy and this limits the progress that they make.
- In lessons, there is usually a quiet industrious atmosphere and pupils work together well. They help one another by pooling ideas and constantly trying to do their best.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils look after one another, and their good behaviour in lessons is a key feature helping all to do well.
 - All say that they feel safe and that they have 'loads of friends on the first day in school'. They say that teachers are kind and helpful, and summed this up by saying, 'It's good to be stuck, but not to stay stuck'.
 - Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school. This is shown by their above-average attendance.
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- A quarter of the parents responded to the inspection questionnaire and all were overwhelmingly positive about the school. Those spoken to during the inspection agree that their children enjoy school. 'It has a family feel' and 'children prefer school to holidays' were some of the supportive views expressed by parents.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, such as name-calling and misuse of mobile phones or emails. They say that bullying is not an issue in the school, a view backed up by school records, but know what to do if they experience any form of bullying and are confident that staff will help them.
- Staff manage behaviour consistently well, and normally deal with any incidents of inappropriate behaviour immediately and effectively. There have been no exclusions in the past two years.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher is ably supported by the senior leadership team. All its members have clearly defined roles and areas of responsibility. Pupils' progress is checked on a regular basis. The deputy headteacher's expertise in analysing data is invaluable in identifying individuals or groups who are falling behind.
 - Leaders check teaching in detail through termly lesson observations, and this helps to make sure that it is effective in promoting learning. These checks identified that teachers' expectations in mathematics were not consistently high enough to raise attainment to the same level as in English. As a result, the school has made the quality of teaching in mathematics a focus for improvement.
 - The leadership of the teaching and support provided for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. Parents and carers are fully informed about their children's progress and involved in regular reviews. Most are pleased with the learning support provided for their children by staff and outside specialists brought in to help.
 - Leaders and the governing body make sure that teachers' pay rises are closely linked to their performance. The national Teachers' Standards are used effectively to judge the quality of teaching.
 - The school benefits from being a member of a multi-academy trust because the extra tier of management in the trust's executive committee adds to the pool of available expertise. The aim to 'share, support and improve' for the six schools in the trust group is central to the committee's work. The close links with other similar schools enable staff to share their skills and experience, and collectively work out the best way to tackle areas of underachievement.
 - The good range of after-school clubs such as 'mad for science' and 'Woodlarks' contribute well to pupils' achievement and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Religious studies, topics about Africa and strong links with the church and a school in Cameroon give pupils a good understanding of other cultures and faiths.
 - The school has built up good relationships with parents and carers. Virtually all agree that staff treat every pupil equally, their children are looked after well, and discrimination is not tolerated in any form.
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■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governors know how effectively staff are working because they regularly visit school to find out for themselves. This gives them a good understanding about the quality of teaching. All study performance data and are able to see how well children are doing compared to others nationally. They are beginning to focus their attention on helping the school to check how well it is tackling the areas identified as priorities for improvement. All governors produce detailed written visit reports, which highlight things that are going well and areas for further improvement. The governing body reviews the performance of the headteacher and teachers each year to determine pay and promotion. Governors are extremely well trained, attending a wide range of training events each year. Their personal expertise is used to good effect to support the work of the various committees and to challenge the school with a view to improving aspects such as health and safety and child protection. All current national requirements relating to employment and safeguarding are met. They manage financial resources well and carefully check the impact of pupil premium funding on the achievement of eligible pupils.
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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	138296
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	412357

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Noon
Headteacher	Louise Freeman
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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