

St Edward's Catholic Primary School

New Road, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 1BW

Inspection dates

20–21 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 do not make enough progress, particularly in the Reception class and in Key Stage 1.
- Teachers do not take sufficient account of pupils' previous learning when planning lessons. Some activities are too easy, particularly for pupils who are more able.
- Too much time is wasted in lessons and pupils do not make enough progress as a result.
- Children in the Reception class do not have enough opportunities to be independent and learn by choosing what to do next, because activities are too closely directed by staff.
- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement as pupils often lose their concentration in lessons as a result of weak teaching.
- Teachers' marking does not always tell pupils how to improve their work, and pupils are not given opportunities to respond to teachers' comments.
- The school's effectiveness has declined since its previous inspection. Leaders, managers and governors have not remedied weaknesses that were identified at that time.
- Leaders have not checked and improved teaching sufficiently well. Some teachers in charge of subjects do not play a part in this.
- The leaders' improvement plans do not include regular measures of progress so it is hard to check that the actions are working.
- Governors have not been given enough information about what is happening and do not use the information they have to check and make sure senior leaders improve the school.

The school has the following strengths

- Some pupils read very confidently for their age, particularly those in Years 2 and 6. The school promotes the enjoyment of reading well.
- Teaching assistants often teach pupils well in small groups.
- Pupils feel safe. They develop a clear understanding of how to help and respect others. This contributes well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is generally more effective as pupils are given time to think deeply and reflect on their learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. They visited 17 lessons or parts of lessons. Four lessons were jointly observed with the executive headteacher and the head of school. They looked at pupils' books jointly with inspectors.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, head of school and subject leaders. Additionally, inspectors met members from the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The views of 57 parents were gathered through the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). The views of 20 members of staff who completed a survey for the inspection team were also taken into account.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents, including the school's improvement plan, local authority reports on the school, information on pupils' current progress, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors met with pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 to discuss the school's approaches to teaching reading. The team also met with pupils from Years 2 to 6 to discuss a range of aspects of daily school life, including breakfast club, behaviour and safety in the playground and in lessons, and their work in English and mathematics.

Inspection team

David Storrie, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Penny Spencer

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.

The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Information about this school

- St Edward's Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is similar to that of most primary schools.
- The school receives additional funding known as the pupil premium (additional government funding to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, who are from service families or who are looked after by the local authority) for a third of its pupils. This proportion is above average. There is a very small number of looked after pupils and there are currently no pupils from service families at the school.
- The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs at the level of school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school is part of a federation with St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Sittingbourne. This means the two schools have the same executive headteacher and governing body.
- Mathematics is led by a subject leader from St Peter's who has just taken over the role.
- The governing body manages a breakfast club.
- The school meets the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by making sure that:
 - teachers expect pupils to take a more active role in their learning and complete more work
 - teachers make sure that all pupils understand how to improve their work and have time to respond to the comments teachers write in marking
 - teachers give pupils work that builds on what they can already do, especially for more-able pupils
 - teachers learn from the outstanding practice that exists within the federation and local network of schools.
- Improve learning in the Reception class by making sure that:
 - children have more opportunities to be independent and learn by choosing their own activities
 - activities set out for children to choose from are carefully planned to target their specific learning needs.
- Improve the quality of leadership by making sure that:
 - where teaching is less than good, teachers are given effective guidance and short-term targets to aim for that improve their performance rapidly
 - subject leaders and other leaders keep a close check on teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility
 - the school improvement plan gives details about what should be achieved at interim stages,

and these are checked to see whether everything is improving quickly enough

- leaders evaluate how well the spending on additional help for pupils is working
- senior leaders look for patterns in pupils' behaviour to ensure that they identify how it can be improved over time.

■ Improve the governance of the school by:

- developing the skills of the governing body, especially their understanding of information from tests and assessments in relation to other schools nationally
- ensuring that governors have all the information required to help them challenge the school's leaders more effectively.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils make insufficient progress in most classes because teachers do not take enough account of what pupils have previously learned. As a result, the most-able pupils, in particular, underachieve.
- Children start the Reception class with skill levels that are typical for their age. Activities for Reception children are directed too much by the teacher and, as a result, the children make inadequate progress and start in Year 1 with below-average attainment. In particular, more-able children and those who have special educational needs make slower progress than children of the same age nationally.
- Pupils' learning and progress in Key Stage 1 are slow. Consequently, very few more-able pupils attained Level 3 (higher than the level expected nationally), especially in mathematics, at the end of Year 2 last year.
- Pupils' progress requires improvement in Key Stage 2. It is good in Years 5 and 6, but is slower in Years 3 and 4. Too few more-able pupils reach higher levels of attainment (Level 5) by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6.
- Phonics (letter sounds and combinations) are effectively taught and pupils in Year 1 last year did better than others nationally in the phonics screening check. As a result of more effective teaching of literacy and phonic skills, pupils make better progress in reading than writing.
- Some disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make better progress than their peers due to well-planned help and support when taught in separate groups. However, the progress of the majority of pupils with additional learning needs is not sufficiently rapid.
- In 2012, pupils in Year 6 who were known to be eligible for free school meals made comparable progress to others in the year group in both English and mathematics. By the end of the year they reached similar standards to their classmates in English, and were over a term ahead in mathematics. Current information indicates that pupils known to be eligible for free school meals continue to make progress at a similar rate to their peers in school and that they too underachieve over time.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate and its quality has declined since the previous inspection.
- In the Reception class, children do not have sufficient time to learn through making decisions and choosing their own activities. Outdoor activities are uninspiring and do not complement what is being taught in the classroom. The activities the children are given or offered are not planned carefully enough to match the needs of more-able children in particular, as well as those with special educational needs. As a result, Reception children lose focus and learn too slowly.
- From Year 1 through to Year 4 teachers give pupils work that is too easy, particularly for the more able. Teachers tend to slow down more-able pupils' learning because they go over ground that has already been covered. Pupils say they could be doing better at school.
- Pupils do not play an active enough role in their learning and they do not complete enough work. Teachers sometimes talk for too long in lessons so pupils sit just listening for long periods, and too often their learning is restricted by poorly planned activities. For example, inspectors observed a history lesson in Year 4 where pupils became restless and distracted. Pupils explained to inspectors they were unable to write more as they had run out of space on their worksheet and had been told to spend the time checking the work they had already done.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly. Teachers' marking, particularly in mathematics, does not always provide enough guidance for pupils about the next steps in their learning or allow time for pupils to correct their work. Pupils are not always sufficiently clear about how they can improve their work.

- Although most parents and carers who completed the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) say that their children are taught well and make good progress, inspectors do not share this view.
- Teaching assistants provide sound support and develop some pupils' understanding through good questioning. This is particularly the case for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those for whom the school receives the pupil premium. Despite this focused support, which helps to boost learning for these pupils, they make the same inadequate progress as all pupils over time.
- Reading is generally well taught, as are the links between letters and sounds (phonics). Pupils have good opportunities to read in class and with adults. This ensures that pupils enjoy reading and make faster progress than they do in writing.
- Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is generally more effective over time. Pupils usually make better progress in lessons as they are allowed to work more independently from the teacher. In Year 5, for example, pupils enjoyed considering how a character in their class novel might feel and behave. This activity was pitched accurately to ensure that all pupils made good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' behaviour is not always good. Although there is a generally positive atmosphere within the school, pupils become disengaged and lose focus in lessons when teachers talk too much or there is a lack of challenge.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 say there are instances of bullying, although they feel these are not frequent. A small minority of parents expressed concern and believe that the school does not effectively deal with bullying. Pupils do not share this view and say that staff follow up any instances reported to them.
- Leaders and staff do not currently analyse records of misbehaviour and bullying to establish if there is more they can do to promote better behaviour. It is unclear, for example, what the school has done following their annual anti-bullying survey to evaluate pupils' views, attitudes and understanding of issues related to bullying.
- Pupils understand the dangers of online games, social networking and how to stay safe from cyber bullying. They also know how to remain safe from a variety of hazards such as the railway, roads and fire. Pupils move around the building sensibly and treat each other with respect.
- The level of absences has been around the national average since the previous inspection, but dropped this year to below the national average. The school is working hard and doing the right things to encourage all pupils to be in school, especially those who are persistent absentees. The school's breakfast club has been used to effectively encourage pupils who are regularly absent from school to attend more.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed well through a variety of activities, including a good range of musical events and the celebration of pupils' art work, and through fundraising. The way pupils are encouraged to share their ambitions helps relationships to be harmonious and mutually respectful.

The leadership and management

are inadequate

- The schools leaders have not tackled the issues from the previous inspection well enough. The leaders have not shown the capacity to address these weaknesses or to promote rapid improvement.
- Areas of previous strength have deteriorated; pupils' behaviour and safety now require improvement and the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception class) provision is now inadequate.
- Pupils' progress has also declined and is inadequate. Although current information shows improvements in some year groups this year, it is not the case in all year groups and the

changes have been too slow to come.

- Teachers across the federation work together, but this partnership working has not yet had a significant impact on the quality of teaching. Teachers do not have enough opportunities to learn from the outstanding practice that exists in the federation or in other schools locally.
 - The leaders' view of the school's current performance is too generous. Development plans identify key areas for improvement, but the way that progress will be checked is not specified in enough detail to help judge the effectiveness of initiatives.
 - The formal yearly performance management of teachers ensures that pay progression is tied to teachers' performance. It is appropriately based on the national Teachers' Standards and on the wider school priorities, identified in the school development plan. However, inadequate teaching is not reducing quickly enough because shorter term actions to eliminate it are not effective. Teachers do not have enough formal guidance and clear short-term targets to aim for that can be followed through in order to improve their practice more rapidly for the benefit of pupils who are currently at the school.
 - The local authority has been supporting the school in challenging the underperformance of teachers. This has helped some teachers to improve their practice. However, the local authority did not identify that the school's self-evaluation judgements were overly generous.
 - Teachers with responsibilities for subjects and aspects of the school are not all playing enough part in leadership. While the federation's mathematics leader has begun an action plan to move the subject forward, it is too early to see the impact of this plan. Other subject leaders have not been widely involved in monitoring aspects of their subjects, for example, through checking work or in observations of teaching. As a result, they are not getting a clear picture of what needs to improve or how to improve it.
 - The school does not tolerate any form of discrimination. However, it does not currently ensure equality of opportunity as too many pupils are underachieving; in particular more able pupils are not doing as well as they should.
 - Pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding have taken part in a variety of programmes and initiatives, including one-to-one help and small group work. However, the school's leaders are not evaluating the outcomes of this additional provision in sufficient detail to establish which initiatives are having the greatest impact on pupils' progress and performance.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is inadequate. Governors have not been aware that pupils do not make sufficient progress or achieve well enough over time. Governors undertake training to develop their skills but do not use performance data well enough to compare their school to others nationally. The governing body has shown evidence of some challenge, for example, by asking the school's leaders about the impact of pupil premium funding. However, governors do not get detailed enough information from leaders to help them check the effectiveness of provision. Although governors, and in particular the Chair of the Governing Body, are visible members of the school community, they do not gather enough information about the school to check and hold leaders to account for the performance of staff and pupils. For example, they do not gather the views of parents and carers regularly enough to gauge how well they feel the school is performing. The governing body is ensuring that performance management is carried out appropriately, but is not challenging leaders well enough about tackling any teachers' underperformance. Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures meet requirements.
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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	118757
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	400376

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Dewar-Whalley
Headteacher	Caroline Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 September 2009
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