

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Batley

Upton Street, Batley, West Yorkshire, WF17 8PH

**Inspection dates** 3–4 July 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

- Pupils do not build well enough on the good start they make in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Too few pupils make good progress in Years 1 to 3 in particular.
- Pupils eligible for support through additional funding do not reach the same standards as other pupils. This difference is not reducing quickly enough.
- Teachers do not always take enough account of what pupils know and can already do when planning lessons. Sometimes pupils are set work that is too easy for them, or does not challenge them to produce their best work. The teaching of reading also requires improvement.
- Attendance is below average. Although the school is working hard to tackle persistent absence, too many families take pupils out of school for holidays in term time.
- The actions of leaders and managers to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement have not yet had a big enough impact. Staff who lead on different aspects of the school's work do not have the skills they need to do this well.
- The governing body does not challenge the school enough to bring about more rapid improvement. It does not have sufficient information about the impact of additional funding provided to the school.

### The school has the following strengths

- The Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The unit is well led and children are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. They have many opportunities to reflect, to be creative and to contribute to the school.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school, with adults and with each other is good. They say they feel safe in school and that bullying is very rare.
- The headteacher is working hard to improve the school. Some aspects of its work are better than at the time of the last inspection.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed sixteen lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher. They also made short visits to other lessons, including a guided reading session.
- Meetings were held with staff, with three governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, and with three groups of pupils. The lead inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority by telephone.
- Inspectors observed lunch and break times, and examined pupils' work in their exercise books and in displays around the school. They also listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 6 read.
- The inspection team also looked at a wide range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, records of the school's checks on teaching, information on pupils' current progress, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the 17 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and also took note of the school's most recent survey of parents' views. The responses of staff who returned inspection questionnaires were also taken into account.
- This inspection coincided with a themed 'active' week and with the school's annual sports day on the second day of the inspection. Inspectors took careful account of this when planning the inspection and also took opportunities to observe how pupils participated in, and responded to, the activities taking place in school.

## Inspection team

Lee Northern, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Bernard Campbell

Her Majesty's Inspector

Stefan Lord

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools.
- The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is in line with the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority.
- Fewer pupils than in other primary schools join or leave part way through their primary school education.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is slightly below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school does not use alternative provision for its pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets out the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

In order to speed up pupils' progress, particularly in Key Stage 1, school leaders and the governing body should:

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that it is consistently good or better, by:
  - ensuring all teaching takes account of what pupils already know and can do and challenges all pupils to produce their best work
  - providing opportunities for pupils to work together and to discuss their ideas in lessons
  - improving the impact of teachers' marking by making clear how pupils can improve their work and by ensuring they respond to the feedback provided
  - strengthening further the teaching of phonics (letters and sounds)
  - improving the use of targets and assessment information so that teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and that these are linked to teachers' performance management and appraisal processes.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
  - clarifying the roles and responsibilities of leaders in the school and ensuring that they have the skills to contribute more effectively to school improvement
  - responding more effectively to the differences in achievement between groups of pupils, including pupils supported through the pupil premium
  - reducing inconsistency across the school by monitoring closely the impact of agreed actions and policies
  - using the information from checks on teaching to provide precise improvement points for teachers and following these up more rigorously.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are usually in line with, or slightly below, those typically expected. As a result of effective teaching, almost all children make good progress by the end of the Reception Year. By the time they join Year 1, most pupils have reached a good level of development in their learning.
- Following this good start, progress slows for many pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1. Not enough teaching is consistently good for pupils to maintain their previous rates of progress. School leaders have begun to tackle these weaknesses and pupils' attainment is starting to rise. Inspection evidence confirms that, by the end of Year 2, pupils are now reaching broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Although pupils' progress speeds up through Key Stage 2, weaker teaching in some classes slows the pace of learning. As a result, although attainment by the end of Year 6 is improving, it is broadly average overall. The progress made by disabled pupils, and by pupils with special educational needs, follows a similar pattern.
- The emphasis placed on improving the quality of pupils' writing is helping to improve attainment in English. However, the impact of this focus varies across the school. In some classes, too little attention is given to developing pupils' literacy skills, or to promoting good speaking and listening.
- Pupils' skills in reading are not improving as well as they are in writing and mathematics. This is because a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is not yet fully in place. Pupils who fall behind in learning these skills are not always helped to catch up quickly enough.
- Most pupils reach expected standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6, although there is some unevenness in how their skills develop. For example, although many pupils enjoy mathematics and develop good calculation skills, they are much less confident when using their mathematics to solve problems which are set in unusual or unfamiliar contexts.
- Although school leaders track carefully the progress that individual pupils make, they have not checked closely enough on the achievement of different groups of pupils. This includes the progress of pupils supported through the pupil premium. In 2012, the lower attainment of this group of pupils was equivalent to around three terms in English and nearly 18 months in mathematics. Inspection evidence confirms that the overall extent of these differences is not yet reducing rapidly enough.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Although the majority of teaching is good, a significant proportion requires improvement. While leaders have provided some support for weaker teaching, actions to ensure all teaching is good or better are not yet having a big enough impact.
- Where teaching is good, pupils are enthused about what they are learning and they are challenged to produce their best work. Careful planning builds up pupils' skills over a sequence of lessons and ensures that they have good opportunities to apply and develop these, for example, in extended writing tasks. Teaching assistants and other adults provide sensitive and effective support for those pupils who need it.
- In less effective lessons, teaching takes too little account of what pupils know and can already do. Sometimes teachers talk for too long and this slows the pace of learning. In some cases, teachers and other adults do too much thinking for pupils, or do not provide good opportunities for pupils to work together and discuss their learning. When teaching writing, teachers do not always provide effective models of what pupils should achieve or clear enough guidance on the features to use when writing in a particular style. In some classes and subjects, there are not enough opportunities for extended writing.

- Much of the teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. For example, through the focused teaching of letters and sounds, children gain confidence in writing by sounding out letters to spell words. However, in some independent work, some children spend too long working on activities that do not challenge them enough.
- The quality of marking in pupils' books varies considerably. The best marking is personal and constructive and identifies clearly what pupils have done well and what they need to improve. Many teachers, however, adopt different approaches and sometimes targets for improvement, or support for pupils' literacy skills, are not helpful enough.
- Teaching makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly in supporting them in reflecting, working well together and listening to others. For example, in a religious education lesson, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were asked to describe what a 'happy memory' meant for them. This prompted a number of sensitive and empathetic responses. One pupil commented that: 'it's something you can think about when you're feeling down, you can go back there'.

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

- Pupils' behaviour is typically good and at times outstanding. They behave well in lessons and are enthusiastic about learning. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy being there. A Year 6 pupil remarked that: 'I'm never bored at school; I prefer to be in school than be on holiday!'
- There is a calm and productive atmosphere in the school and relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils take on extra responsibilities willingly and this contributes well to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, in the sports day taking place during the inspection, Year 6 pupils enjoyed helping to organise the events and confidently took on the roles of coaches for younger pupils.
- Pupils feel safe in school and have a good knowledge of what makes an unsafe situation. They understand the importance of e-safety and are well aware of the dangers of internet sites and social media. Incidents of bullying of any kind are rare and, where it happens, pupils are confident that teachers and other adults will deal with it quickly and effectively.
- Parents and pupils value the warm and welcoming ethos of the school which is at the heart of its community. A few pupils who lack self-confidence and the skills to work with others are very well supported to develop their ability to make better decisions about their behaviour.
- Attendance is lower this year than last year and is below average. A key reason for this is the frequency with which some parents keep their children from school to go on holiday, particularly in Years 2, 3 and 4. Nevertheless, as a result of partnership working with the local authority and better monitoring of attendance, the level of persistent absence has been reduced.

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

- The headteacher is working hard to improve the school. There is a shared commitment to the welfare and care of every pupil in the school and staff and governors are determined to ensure equality of opportunity for every child. The quality of provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved significantly since the time of the last inspection.
- While there is evidence of improvement, systems are not yet in place to secure more rapid and sustained progress in the rest of the school. Although the headteacher has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, actions taken to improve teaching, achievement and attendance have not had enough urgency. The targets set as part of teachers' appraisal processes are sometimes not measurable enough or sufficiently challenging.
- Although leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, the leadership of other aspects of the school's work has not had as much impact. This is because leaders' roles and responsibilities are not clear enough and staff are not fully accountable for the impact of agreed actions. Because of this, the headteacher takes on too many management tasks herself. Too few staff with leadership responsibilities have the skills and confidence to contribute more effectively

to school improvement. Inconsistencies in the ways in which teachers manage pupils' behaviour, mark their work and plan lessons show that leaders' checks are not fully effective in addressing this variation.

- A new system for tracking pupils' progress is being established. This is providing useful management information and enables teachers to identify those pupils who are falling behind and need extra support. However, the way in which assessment information is used to set targets in each year group means that many pupils are not being challenged enough to achieve more highly.
- The leadership of teaching also requires improvement. There is a regular programme of checks on teaching and on the quality of pupils' work, usually undertaken by the headteacher. This is helping to identify where weaker teaching requires support. However, these checks are not systematic or rigorous enough to improve teaching more quickly. For example, although teachers receive useful feedback on how to strengthen their practice, this guidance is often not precise enough or followed up sufficiently well to spur more rapid improvement.
- The local authority ensures it meets its commitment to visit the school each term and to evaluate the progress made. However, it has been too slow to provide enough support for the school to improve more quickly.
- The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils participate in a wide range of activities and particularly enjoy the opportunities to take part in the drama club and school productions. As a result of specialist teaching, the quality of pupils' art work displayed around the school is particularly high.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are very supportive of the school and fulfil their statutory responsibilities well, including in relation to the safeguarding of staff and pupils. They receive helpful guidance in understanding the school's performance. However, their knowledge of the progress that pupils make, and how this is linked to the quality of teaching that pupils receive, is less secure. They do not have enough information about the impact of pupil premium funding on raising the achievement of pupils for whom it is intended. As a result, the governing body are not yet able to provide good levels of challenge for school leaders to improve the school more quickly.

## 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>	107732
<b>Local authority</b>	Kirklees
<b>Inspection number</b>	400933

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>	355
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Patrick Mungovin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicola Grant
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 September 2009
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