

St Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Barnsley Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S5 0QF

Inspection dates 16–17 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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

- Pupils do not achieve well throughout the academy. They make expected, rather than good, progress because teaching is not consistently good.
- Teaching requires improvement because teachers do not consistently set work at the right levels to challenge pupils of all abilities accurately so they learn as well as possible.
- Questions asked by teachers in some lessons do not encourage pupils to develop their thinking and learning.
- Marking does not often help pupils to make good progress because it does not tell them how well they have learnt and what they need to do next.
- Teachers do not plan for pupils to have regular opportunities to practise their literacy, and particularly their numeracy, skills in other lessons.
- Not all staff understand the information about pupils' progress in the new system and do not use it in planning lessons.
- The range of activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage are not carefully planned or well resourced, particularly outdoors, to encourage the children to enquire, explore and investigate, and achieve as well as they can.
- Attendance rates are not high enough to enable all pupils to achieve well. The academy does not have strong procedures for checking and addressing promptly below-average attendance.
- Leadership and management require improvement. Subject leaders do not check or assess regularly how well pupils are learning or report each term to senior leaders what teachers and leaders need to do next in order to drive improvement more quickly.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well. They learn and play together harmoniously.
- The headteacher, supported by the governors, has established good ways of teaching reading, writing and mathematics, which are driving up standards.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is promoted well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors watched 18 lessons, of which three were observed jointly with the headteacher. The inspectors also listened to pupils read, watched pupils at break and lunchtime, observed support groups and attended an assembly.
- The inspectors held meetings with senior and subject leaders, a group of pupils and members of the governing body. The lead inspector spoke with the Principal of All Saints High School.
- The inspectors analysed the 22 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View). They took the findings of the 30 staff questionnaires into account in conducting the inspection.
- The inspectors looked at the academy's work, including its information about the achievement of groups of pupils in each year group. They checked the records of the quality of teaching, looked at samples of pupils' work and analysed policies relating to the safeguarding of pupils, including behaviour and attendance records.

Inspection team

Lynne Blakelock, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Allen

Additional Inspector

Susan Twaits

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Academy converted to become an academy in March 2013. It works under the umbrella trust of All Saints High School in Sheffield, together with four other local primary schools. When its predecessor school, St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be satisfactory.
- The academy is larger than the average-sized primary school. It is over-subscribed.
- The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language. There are 23 languages represented in the academy.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional government funding for looked after pupils, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families) is below the national average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching throughout the academy, so that it is always at least good or better and quickens the pace of progress, by ensuring that:
 - teachers set work at the right levels to challenge pupils of all abilities accurately and to help them to learn as well as they can
 - questioning of pupils supports them in developing their thinking and learning
 - marking tells pupils what they have achieved and the next steps they need to take
 - lessons provide regular, planned opportunities for pupils to practise their writing and mathematical skills in other lessons.
- Quicken the pace of children's learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage by making sure that:
 - activities are carefully planned and well resourced, indoors and outdoors, to encourage children to enquire, explore and investigate, and to achieve their potential
 - the range of activities outdoors mirrors those available indoors in the variety available.
- Improve the attendance rates of pupils by ensuring that:
 - all parents and pupils understand the link between attendance and progress
 - the academy strengthens its procedures for checking attendance and acts promptly on its findings
 - pupils have individual, achievable targets which the academy celebrates promptly when achieved.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management in driving and sustaining improvement by making sure that:
 - all staff understand the academy's information about pupils' progress and use it in planning

lessons

- subject leaders check and assess regularly how well pupils are learning and report their findings termly to senior leaders.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils do not achieve well through any of the three key stages. This is due to teaching not being consistently good and, as a result, pupils make expected, rather than good, progress.
- By the end of Year 6 standards are average overall, including in mathematics, and just above in reading. In writing they are well below average at both the expected and higher levels. However, standards are rising in all three subjects in Key Stage 1 because of the good methods for teaching literacy and numeracy skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' learning is accelerating in Key Stage 2 because the academy provides lots of support groups to quicken pupils' learning in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils make expected rates of progress overall by the end of Year 6. A lower-than-expected proportion of pupils in Year 6 have made the progress expected of them in writing. However, in Years 1, 2 and 3 progress in writing is accelerating and most pupils reach or exceed the levels expected for their age.
- Progress in reading has quickened in all year groups due to teachers throughout the academy using phonics (the sounds made by letters and groups of letters) to support pupils' reading, writing and spelling from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards. Pupils know how to pronounce groups of letters accurately and are so comfortable with this method that they use it whenever they read to sound out words and to help them spell.
- Children start Nursery with levels of skills and knowledge that are lower than those typical in most areas of learning and expected levels in personal development. They make expected progress in all areas of learning, rather than good, because activities, especially those outdoors, are not always interesting or well resourced enough to capture the children's imagination and encourage them to enquire, explore and investigate. Outdoor activities do not mirror the range indoors, thus narrowing learning.
- Pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding are given support to strengthen the individual reading, writing and number skills that they find difficult. A 'Greedy Readers' club and a film club spur their interest in reading and writing. The attainment of those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is one term behind that of non-eligible pupils in English, and one year behind in mathematics.
- Most groups of pupils achieve at similar rates, including those who speak English as an additional language, who also have opportunities to speak their first language in the academy. However, a few disabled pupils and those supported by school action and school action plus achieve more slowly than other groups despite some very appropriate individual support. The school has recognised the link between this slower rate of progress and their lower attendance rates.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Too much teaching in all subjects is not consistently good and, as a result, pupils' progress is no better than expected.
- The main barrier to good progress is that, in many lessons, teachers plan the same tasks for pupils of all abilities which are not an accurate match to the different levels at which they work.
- Questioning of pupils is variable in its impact throughout the academy because it is not always planned carefully enough to encourage pupils to develop their thinking and assess what they are learning.
- Marking of pupils' work is sometimes very helpful in telling pupils exactly what they have done well but, at other times, teachers' comments are too general. Teachers do not tell pupils regularly enough what to do next to make further progress.
- Pupils have some, but not enough, opportunities to practise their writing skills in other lessons.

There are far fewer chances for pupils to practise their numeracy skills in other lessons.

- In a number of lessons, particularly those at Key Stage 2, teachers make certain that pupils know the levels at which they are working and most have a reasonable idea of how to reach them. Teachers record children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage in detail.
- There is some good teaching and some effective support by teaching assistants. For instance, both were observed in a Year 2 numeracy lesson in which pupils learnt well how to solve number word problems. Tasks were challenging and pupils took responsibility for their learning. The teaching assistants, as well as the pupils, knew the aims of the lesson and guided pupils who needed additional help towards meeting them.
- A strength in all lessons is the good relationships between staff and pupils, which promote a happy, supportive learning environment.
- Teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to read. Guided reading sessions develop pupils' understanding of texts as well as how to read.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and throughout the day. Most are always polite and respectful to staff and towards each other because they know that this is the right way to behave. They keep the academy's rules about behaviour, which all staff apply in the same way.
- The academy uses the Catholic faith as the foundation for its work. From the time that they join the Nursery, pupils are encouraged to treat everybody equally and to celebrate their differences. They work and play harmoniously. Pupils and parents say that there is very little bullying. Pupils understand that it is wrong. When it does occur, it is dealt with quickly.
- Staff ensure that pupils know about the range of different cultures and beliefs represented in the academy through special days and topics. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is well supported through opportunities to provide service to the academy community. The academy council, for example, has set up a buddy system which ensures that younger pupils are supported by older pupils during play.
- Through daily routines, assemblies and lessons pupils develop knowledge and understanding, appropriate for their age, of the possible dangers they may face. Children in the Nursery speak knowledgeably about road safety and pupils know the dangers of talking to strangers and being in water. Pupils are very aware of the issues posed by the internet and what to do to keep safe when using it.
- Although attendance is average overall, it hides variations in the rate of attendance of different groups of pupils and the persistent absenteeism of several pupils. Pupils do not have individual attendance targets for the academy to celebrate when met.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Inspection evidence shows that leaders and managers do not have a fully accurate picture of the quality of teaching in the academy. Subject leaders do not regularly check and assess the quality of pupils' learning, or report their findings termly to senior leaders, in order to drive improvement as quickly as possible.
- The academy does not have strong procedures for checking attendance and acting very promptly on their findings. It has not made sure that pupils and their parents understand the link between attendance and how well pupils learn.
- The headteacher ensures that the staff understand the school's priorities, which they strive as a team to achieve. The senior staff support the headteacher in a range of roles that fit well the academy's priorities and which are based on its good collection of information about pupils' progress. As a result, pupils' skills, for example in reading, are accelerating. The system to show pupils' progress and the standards that they reach is new, however, and teachers are only recently starting to use the information from it to set work appropriate to the levels at which

pupils are working.

- The academy's main priority is to improve teaching and thereby pupils' achievement. Leaders watch teaching regularly but some judgements are overgenerous in assessing how well pupils learn. However, during the inspection judgements of teaching made by senior staff were the same as those of the inspectors. The improvement plan and training for staff reflect accurately the aspects the academy most needs to improve.
- Teachers have targets to aim for which are based, firstly, on improving teaching in order to accelerate pupils' progress. The headteacher knows that some targets are not sufficiently measurable. They have to be achieved over a two-year period before the headteacher and governors consider awarding a pay rise.
- The roles and responsibilities of subject leaders are developing, including methods of assessing pupils' learning, in order to ensure a fully accurate picture of standards and progress.
- The academy correctly focuses on teaching reading, writing and mathematics, with opportunities for pupils to develop a range of additional skills, such as scientific and creative, through topics and after-school activities. From Nursery, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is encouraged well through lessons, routines and responsibilities. Pupils have equal chances to succeed in the inclusive academy.
- The trust, although a developing partnership, is providing beneficial support for literacy teaching for the staff and is sharing other resources, including for mathematics. Links with parents, who support strongly the academy's work, are helpful to both home and school. Parents have regular opportunities to attend events and to take part in family learning. Almost all parents attend parents' evenings and there is good attendance at workshops, such as those to support reading.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are well informed by the headteacher. They also find out a lot for themselves about the academy's performance and, as a result, question its actions. They know how pupil premium funding is spent and the procedures for setting teachers' performance targets. The governors understand that, although they are involved in writing and checking the academy's evaluation of its performance, some of their judgements about its performance are not backed up by evidence. The governing body knows that the attendance of some pupils is not regular enough. Governors also know that writing skills are improving lower down the school. The academy's procedures for keeping pupils safe meet the statutory 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	139347
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	421171

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	315
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill Brown
Headteacher	Finnuala Nelis
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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