

St Ethelbert's RC Primary School

Melbourne Road, Deane, Bolton, Lancashire, BL3 5RL

Inspection dates 16–17 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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' progress is inconsistent between classes. Attainment in mathematics has dipped and is below average.
- Not enough teaching is good and better. Improvements in teaching are not consistent throughout the school. Teachers do not always encourage independent learning and make certain that more-able pupils achieve as well as they can.
- Teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is variable and the school lacks a clear plan to ensure skills are taught in the correct sequence.
- School leaders do not monitor teaching and pupils' progress precisely enough to ensure that weaker aspects are addressed quickly. Teachers' targets do not always have a sharp focus on the progress pupils make.
- Leadership and management do not ensure the school moves forward fast enough because plans for development do not identify clear targets closely linked to accelerating pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress, as do disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- The teaching of letters and sounds is good and is helping pupils improve their reading and writing.
- Achievement in writing has improved throughout the school since the last inspection and is now in line with the national average.
- The school is friendly and welcoming. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and behave well in lessons and around school. They feel safe in school.
- All school leaders, governors and staff provide a strong, caring ethos in the school and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes and saw 15 lessons, especially in English and mathematics. Two of the lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors listened to pupils read and observed teaching assistants working with pupils.
- Discussions were held with pupils in lessons and their work was discussed with them.
- Meetings and discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, four representatives of the governing body, teaching and classroom support staff, pupils and two representatives of the local authority.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised in English, mathematics and a range of other subjects.
- A wide range of documentation was reviewed, including national assessment data, the school's own data, monitoring records of the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils, the school's view of its own performance and the school development plan. In addition, the minutes of the governing body meetings, safeguarding documentation and external reports from the local authority were reviewed.
- Eighteen responses from parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account as well as the views from 17 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Gillian Hunter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Susan Barkway

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is lower than the national average.
- Pupils supported by school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is lower than average.
- The number of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is higher than the national average. The pupil premium is funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language is close to the national average.
- The school 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 the overall quality of teaching to increase the rates of pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan and provide challenge for all abilities especially more-able pupils
 - developing more independent learning across all subjects.
- Improve attainment and progress in mathematics throughout the school by:
 - improving teachers' subject knowledge
 - putting a plan in place that makes sure mathematical skills are taught in the correct sequence so that one skill builds on another
 - developing pupils' competency and confidence in the basic skills of numeracy
 - ensuring that teachers provide increasingly complex problems for pupils to solve using their numeracy skills.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - leaders consistently evaluating and using the information from all monitoring activities to promote improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress
 - ensuring that teachers' targets have a sharp focus on the impact of their teaching on the progress pupils make
 - ensuring that the school development plan sets out precisely the steps that need to be taken to raise attainment and achieve the school's and pupils' challenging targets.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Test results show that attainment at the end of Year 6 has fallen to below average in mathematics and reading and is broadly average in writing. Although there are pockets of good progress especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage, overall achievement requires improvement.
- The more able pupils do not always make enough progress, especially in reading and mathematics. This means that the promotion of equality of opportunity is not yet fully effective.
- In mathematics, there are inconsistencies and although work in books shows good progress in basic written methods of calculating in number, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use and apply their learning across different aspects of mathematics and investigate real-life problems independently.
- Children enter the school with skills and knowledge that are very low for their age, especially in communication and language development. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children learn quickly and make good progress in communication, including early reading and writing skills and this gives them a secure base for their future learning.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is good in reading because the teaching of phonics is effective and pupils use these skills well to tackle new words. Since the last inspection, standards in writing have improved steadily and by Year 6 are broadly average overall. However, not enough pupils are making good progress in reading and writing to ensure they achieve at the highest levels.
- Lesson observations and samples of pupils' work confirm that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress as a result of effective and well targeted support. The small number of pupils who are at early stages of speaking English make good progress.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make similar progress to others, although this varies with the different ability in each cohort. This includes those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The gap between pupils known to be entitled to free school meals and other pupils is narrower than nationally in reading and writing, but wider in mathematics. Attainment in English is broadly in line with the national average and in mathematics it is below.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies across years and subjects. This leads to inconsistency in pupils' progress especially in mathematics.
- Where teaching requires improvement, teachers' expectations are not high enough and as a result pupils, especially the more able, are too often involved in learning that is too easy for them. In some classes, pupils do not do as well as they should and have limited opportunities to work independently.
- Whilst mathematics teaching is good and improving in Years 5 and 6, the amount of good and outstanding teaching throughout the school is insufficient to accelerate pupils' progress. Teachers' subject knowledge varies and they lack the guidance needed to ensure that skills are taught in the correct sequence. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their learning or to develop their basic calculation skills efficiently and as a result, they sometimes struggle to reach an answer quickly.
- Training and support for all teaching staff has been effective in raising pupils' attainment in writing. This is because the school has provided teachers and pupils with many opportunities to improve how writing is taught. The teaching of reading is improving, with the stronger teaching of letters and sounds (phonics). Not enough attention is given to aspects of writing that will enable pupils to reach the higher levels. Teaching staff have not received the same level of training and support in mathematics and, therefore, their subject knowledge is not sufficient to

provide teaching and learning opportunities that will enable all pupils to make rapid progress.

- In the effective lessons, teachers involve pupils from the start in contributing to and participating in lively and motivating activities. Teachers often set a brisk pace and respond well to pupils' learning needs by adapting and reshaping tasks. They make regular use of information and communication technology to boost pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 were investigating the difference in temperatures throughout the world and used iPads well to find the information quickly on the internet. They were able to find the mean and range of the temperatures efficiently before representing their findings in graphical form.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is good and activities are planned carefully to promote children's enthusiasm and interest in learning. There is a wide range of well resourced activities that they select for themselves, particularly for early reading and writing. Skills are introduced systematically through rhymes, songs and games. The use of the outdoors to promote learning in all areas is good.
- The support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. Teaching assistants provide skilled support for pupils in lessons and in small group activities. Support for those for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is good in reading and writing, but is less effective in mathematics.
- Teachers mark work and provide regular positive feedback to pupils. This was seen most effectively in Year 6. However, marking is more precise in writing than in mathematics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- All pupils are welcomed and they get on well together. Behaviour is good in classrooms and around school. The school is calm and orderly, and relationships between pupils and adults are good.
- All pupils are well integrated into lessons, including those from different backgrounds and those who find it more difficult to sustain good behaviour. Any behavioural concerns are managed well so that misbehaviour rarely affects the learning of others. On a few occasions, when work is not matched carefully enough to pupils' needs, they lose concentration, limiting their progress.
- Pupils treat each other with respect and consideration. They take good care of each other, especially in the playground. The school works closely with parents in ensuring that pupils are punctual. Attendance is at least average.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and feel that there is very little in school. They recognise concerns regarding internet safety and are confident that there are numerous adults to talk to if they have any worries. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils respond well to the strong spiritual, moral, social cultural support and guidance they receive. They develop positive attitudes to life and take responsibility and contribute to a safe environment. An example of this is the use of nominated pupils who act as guardian angels to support any unhappy pupils in the school.
- Most parents spoken to during the inspection and through responses to the online questionnaire indicated they believe that behaviour is good. Several spoke with pleasure about how their children's additional needs are well supported.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors share a determination that the school will continue to improve. The school is working closely with external support and the local authority and this has led to a clearer focus on areas to improve. This is demonstrating a secure capacity to improve.
- The school's analysis of its own performance has identified that the school requires further

improvement. Priorities are accurate but actions in the school's improvement plan are not precise, measurable and challenging enough. As a result, senior leaders and the governing body are not able to ensure all aspects of teaching and learning improve strongly.

- The tracking of pupils' progress is variable but improving, so that staff are becoming clearer about where improvement is needed in order to raise pupils' attainment. Information gained from this tracking is being used more effectively, although more needs to be done to ensure the more able pupils make enough progress.
- The checks made on teaching and learning are comprehensive but have not always identified shortcomings precisely enough. This has held back the pace of improvement in teaching and weaker aspects remain, especially in mathematics. Subject leaders have few opportunities to check on teaching and learning in classrooms in the subjects for which they hold responsibility.
- Training to raise pupils' attainment in English has been effective. This is not yet the case in mathematics and a lack of planned access to specialised training and support for all staff has resulted in limited improvements in the teaching of mathematics.
- Teachers have targets to improve their performance but these have not always been sharply focused on the impact that teaching has on pupils' progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively and pupils' efforts are clearly valued and there are many opportunities for pupils to work together. The school tackles any issues of discrimination well and this contributes to the harmony in the community.
- Parents are pleased with the care their children receive. The headteacher and staff are passionate about ensuring pupils enjoy their learning and feel safe. Procedures to ensure pupils' safety meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has had a range of training and now has a much clearer view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
 - Governors are nominated to oversee subjects and to review data to gain first-hand information on teaching and the progress pupils make. They have played a part in challenging the decline in mathematics and in calling in support.
 - Governors are now stronger at holding the school to account for the standards achieved since the last inspection. They are aware of the quality of teaching and check that staff, including the headteacher, meet their targets before increases in salaries are awarded.
 - Governors ensure budgeting procedures comply with best practice and that the pupil premium benefits those pupils eligible for such funding.

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	105222
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	413039

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	248
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tom Grady
Headteacher	Mandy Messham
Date of previous school inspection	12 July 2010
Telephone number	01204 333036
Fax number	01204 333037
Email address	seniorj@st-ethelberts.bolton.sch.uk

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