

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School Aided

Farrington Road, Cullercoats, North Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE30 3EY

Inspection dates 25–26 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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

- Although there have been recent improvements, over time, the actions of school leaders, including governors, have failed to sustain the high levels of pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching noted at the last inspection.
- Targets for improvement set by leaders are not ambitious enough. The school's development plan is not focused sharply on the key things that will make a difference.
- Leaders' checks on the school's effectiveness lack rigour so some weaknesses, including in the curriculum, have not been identified and tackled swiftly.
- Pupils' progress is too variable because teaching is not always good in all classes. Although attainment is improving, not all pupils achieve well.
- Teachers do not plan topic work carefully enough to ensure pupils fully develop their skills and understanding in a broad range of subjects other than English, mathematics, science and religious education.
- Teachers do not always give pupils a clear understanding of the next steps in their learning and how to achieve them.
- Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to use and build on their skills in reading, writing and mathematics in other subjects so they can achieve well.

The school has the following strengths

- The provision in the Nursery is good. As a result, children swiftly settle into school and make good progress in this class.
- Pupils treat one another and the adults in the school with respect. Relationships are strong. Pupils say that bullying is very rare.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of pupils about their work and play in school.
- The inspectors met with three members of the governing body, including a parent governor, as well as the headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject leaders. They also met with a local authority representative about support for the school.
- Inspectors took into account 59 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 16 responses to the staff survey. Additionally, an inspector spoke informally to parents in the playground at the end of the school day.
- The inspectors reviewed the work of the school including its development plan and the systems for checking pupils' progress. They also looked at documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors listened to some pupils read and looked at a wide range of other evidence including pupils' current work in books and displays across the whole school.

Inspection team

Janette Corlett, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Wilson	Additional Inspector
June Foster	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average. There are no disabled pupils currently in the school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided to schools to support 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.
- Most pupils are from a White British background and no pupil is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is before- and after-school provision on the school site. This is not managed by the governing body and did not form part of the inspection but a report on its quality can be found on the Ofsted website at: www.ofsted.gov.uk
- The school has experienced considerable turnover of staff since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is always good or better throughout the school by ensuring that:
 - all teachers use the knowledge they have from assessing pupils' work to plan and teach lessons that closely match the needs of individual pupils and motivate them to want to learn as much as they can
 - teachers receive appropriate training to improve their subject knowledge so that they have the skill and expertise to teach effectively across the full range of subjects in the curriculum
 - teachers routinely set appropriately challenging targets for pupils to help them improve further
 - topic work is carefully planned to provide purposeful learning outcomes for pupils, gives them frequent opportunities to practise their skills in reading, writing and mathematics and does not rely solely on undemanding worksheets
 - pupils' work in topic books is regularly marked and that teachers' expectations of the amount and quality of work in these books are high.
- Accelerate pupils' progress from Reception through to the end of Year 6 so that it is at least good in order to sustain recent improvements in pupils' attainment in all classes, by:
 - making sure all teachers create opportunities across the full range of subjects for pupils to practise and improve their skills in reading, writing and mathematics
 - ensuring that leaders rigorously check to see whether the quality of pupils' work is good in all subjects and that the work set is at the right level to ensure pupils make as much progress as possible.
- Strengthen the impact of the school's leadership, management and governance on improving the school's performance, particularly pupils' achievement and teaching, by:
 - improving the systems for checking the quality of teaching and pupils' learning and progress in lessons so that weaknesses are tackled swiftly
 - ensuring that leaders, managers and governors know how much progress pupils need to make

in order to do as well or better than is expected nationally, so that they can set challenging targets for teachers, hold them to account and drive up attainment in all year groups

- making sure the school's plan for improvement contains clear and focused actions, and milestones against which success can be measured
- ensuring that leaders' monitoring activities include probe the learning and progress of different groups of pupils in sufficient depth.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although good in some classes, pupils' progress is uneven as they move through the school so they do not always achieve well relative to their starting points. Pupils' attainment in 2012 was broadly in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils making expected progress between Key Stage 1 and 2 was similar to national figures in English and in mathematics in 2012.
- Inspection evidence and recent teacher assessments show that pupils' attainment in the current Year 6 in English and mathematics is higher than it was in 2012. This is in part due to an emphasis on pupils practising the skills they will need in the end-of-year tests in this year group so that they make up some lost ground. This restricts learning opportunities in other subjects.
- Leaders acknowledge that pupils currently in Year 2 did not make the progress that they should during Year 1. However, the school's assessments show a more positive picture for this academic year, although pupils are not doing as well in writing as in reading and mathematics.
- Recent improvements to the quality of the teaching of phonics (the sounds which letters and groups of letters make) mean that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has increased this year compared with 2012.
- There are very few pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or with special educational needs. Inspection evidence showed no significant gaps in their attainment and progress in English and mathematics in relation to that of other pupils in the school.
- Children in the Nursery make good progress in their learning because teaching is consistently good in that year group.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable across the school. Although there is some good or outstanding teaching, too much requires improvement because teachers do not always demand enough of pupils and teachers' expectations vary from class to class.
- Where teaching required improvement, teachers expected pupils to sit and listen for too long and, as a result, they did not have enough time to complete tasks. At other times, the independent activities teachers planned were not stimulating or challenging enough to make pupils really want to learn.
- Teachers assess pupils' work in reading, writing and mathematics but do not always use this knowledge to set challenging individual targets for improvement and to plan work which will make sure that all pupils achieve as well as they can.
- Work set for pupils in topic lessons, which include elements of history, geography, art and information and communication technology, sometimes lacks purpose and challenge. Pupils complete worksheets that are insufficiently demanding or colour in pictures to stick in their books. This is a barrier to good learning in these subjects and reduces the opportunities pupils have to practise their skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 'themed' weeks, where teachers move away from the normal curriculum to provide enrichment activities, these are not planned well enough to ensure that pupils build on their prior learning and move forward.
- Some teaching is good or outstanding. In one science lesson, for example, the teacher used her good subject knowledge to help pupils to make rapid progress as they learned about the life-cycle of plants. The teacher encouraged pupils to use accurate scientific vocabulary when explaining the functions of different parts of a flower. However, there is not enough good or outstanding teaching to ensure that all pupils in all year groups make at least good progress.
- Teachers' marking has improved recently. For example, teachers frequently give pupils helpful guidance on how to improve their writing. However, marking in other subjects is not always as

helpful and teachers' expectations of the quality of presentation and the volume of work pupils should complete are variable.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- In lessons where the teaching requires improvement, pupils' attitudes to their work are less positive than in other lessons. Pupils remain polite and rarely disrupt one another but they lose interest and do not focus on their learning
- Pupils' behaviour as they move in and around the school is typically very sensible and they treat one another kindly. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and the vast majority of parents who completed the survey agreed.
- A small minority of parents were concerned about bullying in the school. Inspection evidence, gained from talking to pupils and looking at the school's records of any incidents, showed that bullying in any form is very rare. Pupils say that they occasionally fall out but are confident that adults in the school are willing to listen and will offer support where necessary.
- Most learners attend regularly and arrive at school on time. Attendance is above average. The school works well with families to promote the importance of regular attendance.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Despite the efforts of leaders and governors, pupils' achievement and the overall quality of teaching are not as good as they were at the time of the last inspection. However, there is evidence that this situation is being reversed. Teaching is improving and pupils' attainment and progress are rising.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and on pupils' progress are not rigorous enough. The learning and performance of different groups of pupils are not probed deeply enough, nor reported to the governing body.
- The school's plan for development is not sharply focused and lacks the measurable 'milestones' that would enable success to be monitored adequately throughout the year.
- The roles of the deputy headteacher and subject leaders are not clearly defined and some teachers are not aware of exactly who is responsible for particular curriculum areas. Furthermore, due to staff turnover or long-term absence, the leadership of subjects and the Early Years Foundation Stage is not always well developed.
- Teachers' assessments are increasingly accurate following training and moderation exercises carried out with other local schools and with support from the local authority. However, school leaders do not use the information gained from this to check systematically on pupils' progress and to hold teachers to account for the achievement of the pupils they teach.
- The school's 'creative curriculum' ensures that the required subjects are studied, but does not make sure that all necessary elements are taught at the right levels. The school provides a good range of sporting, musical and other opportunities that enrich and enliven the curriculum. All pupils have the chance to learn to play a musical instrument. Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively through opportunities for reflection and for learning about people with different faiths and from a variety of cultural backgrounds.
- The school's arrangements for the performance management of staff are not sufficiently robust. The objectives set for teachers are not demanding; meeting these objectives would not necessarily lead to good or better progress for pupils. Teachers' movement up the pay scales is not closely linked to improvements in the quality of their teaching and the impact this is having on pupils' progress.
- The school maintains strong links with the local secondary school which helps to support and prepare pupils for their change of school at the end of Year 6.

- The support of the local authority has been effectively matched to the needs of the school and contributed to improvements in a number of areas including helping to secure the accuracy of teachers' assessments.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is generally well informed about the school's performance overall, but does not receive detailed information about how particular groups of pupils are doing. The governing body holds the school's leaders to account and is well aware of its role in providing challenge and support. Governors understand how the performance of teachers is managed and how this links to progression in pay. Governors visit the school and talk to staff but do not spend much time observing teaching and learning at first hand. They have a good grasp of the school's finances and are able to account for the impact of the spending of pupil-premium 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	108618
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	412210

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	255
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Caroline McLean
Headteacher	Colette Bland
Date of previous school inspection	21 October 2008
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