

St Alban's Catholic Primary School, Chaddesden, Derby

Newstead Avenue, Chaddesden, Derby, DE21 6NU

Inspection dates 25–26 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. Rates of progress in Key Stage 2 have been consistently strong over the last three years. Pupils' achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is steadily improving.
- In Key Stage 2, where some teaching is outstanding, teachers consistently match work well to pupils' needs and ability levels.
- Most teachers direct pupils' work well, ask questions skilfully to make sure they understand it, and make good use of assessment to help pupils know how well they are doing.
- Effective support ensures that disabled pupils, those pupils with special educational needs and pupils at an early stage of learning English are fully included in lessons and make good progress.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes contribute well to their successful learning. Pupils enjoy school, and seek to uphold its good name. They are exceptionally courteous and behave well. Relationships are strong and the school is a very harmonious community.
- Leaders and governors have taken effective action to improve teaching and learning following regular checks on pupils' progress. This has improved pupils' achievement, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Well-planned training and the recruitment of enthusiastic, young teachers who are keen to develop their expertise further have contributed well to school improvement.
- Parents particularly appreciate the school's successful efforts to ensure pupils' well-being.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Leaders have not yet secured outstanding teaching throughout the school.
- Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to develop and extend pupils' writing skills.
- Good achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is not yet fully established for all pupils. The more-able pupils are not always challenged in lessons in these year groups.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 19 lessons taught by 13 teachers. Three of these lessons were observed together with senior leaders.
- Samples of pupils' work from the previous school year were analysed. An inspector listened to a few Year 2 pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with school staff, a group of pupils and two governors. The lead inspector spoke on the telephone to a representative from the local authority about the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 24 questionnaires completed by staff and the 25 responses by parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Responses to the school's own recent survey of parents' views about the school were also analysed. An inspector spoke informally to some parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the work in pupils' books; monitoring records; school improvement plans; the school's own data on pupils' attainment and progress; consultants' reports; and policies, procedures and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Derek Aitken, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Roary Pownall

Additional Inspector

Lindsay Hall

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools.
- Just over 75% of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils of Polish origin is increasing steadily and the remaining pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. A small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. In this school, this extra government funding is currently received for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or a statement of special educational needs are well below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Most of the teaching staff have joined the school in the last three years.
- The school hosts before- and after-school clubs and a holiday club, but these are privately run and inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching outstanding and improve pupils' progress in the Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1 classes by ensuring that:
 - all lessons are planned consistently well to help pupils to understand and to complete tasks successfully
 - more-able pupils are always identified clearly in lesson planning and given harder work to do.
- Improve achievement in writing across the school by:
 - giving children in Nursery and Reception better opportunities for writing independently, to consolidate and to extend their developing knowledge of letters and sounds
 - ensuring that pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 have enough opportunities to add depth to their work in one type of writing before moving on to the next one.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All groups of pupils achieve well overall during their time in the school. They do particularly well in Key Stage 2 and progress in the younger age groups is accelerating.
- Until this year, pupils, including the more able, have often joined Year 3 with below-average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. In the last three years pupils have made consistently good progress in Key Stage 2. This has enabled them by the end of Year 6 to do well at the nationally expected Level 4, although the higher Levels 5 and 6 have often remained out of reach for more-able pupils.
- The proportions of pupils in Year 6 who made or exceeded the progress expected nationally in 2012 in reading and mathematics were above average. Provisional results for 2013 show a similar picture although progress is not quite so strong in writing. This is because continual switching between different types of writing makes it hard for pupils to practise writing in depth, or to incorporate the improvements suggested in teachers' marking into their work.
- The school's strong focus on reading contributed to a considerable rise in attainment for Year 2 pupils in 2013, reflecting good progress. Attainment also rose well in writing and mathematics, although the modest improvements at the higher Level 3 showed that the most able pupils were not all doing as well as they could.
- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and aptitudes that are broadly typical for this age group. They are now making good and improving progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. However, in a few letters and sounds (phonics) lessons some children, especially the more able, are not fully challenged and they have limited opportunities to reinforce their new knowledge through independent writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. Effective monitoring and good support from teaching assistants enable them to achieve their targets. Polish pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language settle quickly into school and, together with pupils from other backgrounds, progress equally as well as their White British classmates.
- In 2012, the attainment of Year 6 pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium was lower than that of other pupils, about two terms behind in English and three terms behind in mathematics. However, their attainment was higher than that of similar pupils nationally and they made similar progress in both subjects to other pupils in their year group. The gap in attainment within the school remains steady in Key Stage 1 but has reduced for Key Stage 2 pupils in reading and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good, and in some lessons in Key Stage 2 it is outstanding. In the best lessons tasks are very well matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils are provided with suitably challenging work and skilful questioning prompts pupils to think carefully, to question their assumptions and to extend their answers.
- Teaching assistants help disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and pupils learning English as an additional language well by asking probing questions to test their

understanding. This ensures that they are fully involved in lessons and make good progress.

- Nursery and Reception staff also question children sensitively but persistently. This helps them to develop their speaking and listening skills well and their understanding of, for example, mathematical concepts of size, length and volume.
- When lessons proceed at a brisk pace, teachers direct pupils' work well and refer regularly to the lesson's learning aims to check how well pupils are coping with new ideas and to develop their knowledge. Teachers modify the work skilfully in the light of pupils' answers and contributions. This helps pupils know how well they are doing and prepares them securely to take the next steps in their learning.
- Mathematics is mainly taught well because the work is presented in ways which pupils find enjoyable, such as games, puzzles and mini-challenges. More-able pupils in Year 6 rise to the challenge of thinking in more abstract terms when faced with algebraic equations.
- These strengths in teaching ensure that nearly all lessons run smoothly. Routines and relationships are well established so that teachers can rely on all groups of pupils to concentrate and work hard. Pupils make good use of 'paired partner' routines to test out their ideas.
- Marking is of a good standard. Pupils are given regular, useful written feedback and pupils' positive attitudes towards self-improvement are shown by their willingness to respond quickly to opportunities to correct their work.
- Recent improvements in teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 are not fully established. In a few cases teachers do not plan lessons well enough to help pupils to understand and to complete tasks well, and to maintain their interest in their work. More-able pupils are occasionally not identified, or are not given harder work to stretch them.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Children whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are supported well and all children make good gains in their personal and social development, especially in the outdoor area. They settle quickly in Nursery and form strong bonds with adults.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school, find learning fun and feel very safe in school. Attendance levels have varied a little in the last few years. Currently, they are average.
- Pupils' behaviour is nearly always good. It is occasionally exemplary in lessons when they are highly motivated, and around school. Pupils are exceptionally well mannered and relate well to adults. They comply quickly with staff's requests and demonstrate their self-reliance, for example by selecting suitable activities and games to keep themselves occupied during wet play-times.
- Pupils have few concerns about behaviour and there have been no exclusions in the last two years. Pupils say that bullying is rare, and that any disagreements are normally of a minor nature and quickly resolved. Pupils are taught to identify, avoid and manage risks well, for example in lessons run by the police and outside agencies such as Childline on cyber-bullying and internet safety.
- Almost all of the parents who responded to the questionnaires, and all of those spoken to during the inspection, say their children feel settled and safe at the school. This is partly due to the

strong sense of community felt by generations of White British families who have attended the school and the warm welcome extended to newer arrivals of other nationalities and backgrounds. Consequently, pupils treat each other with respect, courtesy and consideration.

- The school promotes pupils' sense of community well through assemblies on the theme of 'unity' and 'common humanity'. Pupils' keenness to uphold the school's good image is shown in their warm welcome to visitors and their reminders to each other to be 'smart' while doing up each other's ties. 'Prayer partners' support pupils' spiritual and social development very well. The school council raises money, not only to improve facilities on the school playground but also to support underprivileged children in Africa.
- Pupils work hard, concentrate well and persevere. Their very positive attitudes support their good progress, although on a few occasions when teaching is less strong pupils become distracted and begin to lose interest in their work.

The leadership and management are good

- Pupils' improved achievement is underpinned by a combination of the sharper focus leaders have brought to bear in the last few years on raising attainment and the recruitment of enthusiastic, highly capable staff, most of whom were new to teaching when they took up post.
- Leaders, including those responsible for English and mathematics, carry out a suitable range of activities to monitor the quality of teaching, and they cross-check their findings with reports from external consultants. Their evaluations of teaching are mainly accurate. This enables them to set appropriate targets for individual staff and tailor training, including through lesson observations and opportunities to observe best practice in other schools, to meet the needs of the school and individual teachers. The procedures for managing teachers' performance are comprehensive and well documented.
- Pupils' progress is checked effectively, especially in Key Stage 2. The information collected is used well to identify areas for improvement, to direct resources and to reduce the gap in attainment between pupils eligible for pupil premium funding and other pupils. Small-group tuition has been particularly effective for Key Stage 2 pupils in this respect.
- Data on pupils' performance are shared effectively with teachers, who are well aware of their accountability for ensuring pupils make good progress towards their targets. Staff morale is strong, fuelled by rapid improvements in provision and a determination evident, for example in the work of younger staff, to improve their practice further.
- Leaders have tackled nearly all the issues from the previous inspection well. Good gains have been made in catering for pupils who have additional learning needs, and the improved quality of teaching has ensured pupils are 'switched on' to learning.
- The curriculum fosters pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The first two of these 'strands' are particularly strong. Lessons on the rain forest, Barnardo's and the Victorians help pupils develop into considerate, thoughtful young people.
- Recent funding for physical education is being used well to strengthen the curriculum, through the employment of a specialist teacher. The new procedures to evaluate this initiative are not yet focused sharply enough on measuring subsequent improvements in pupils' levels of fitness.
- The local authority has stepped up its involvement with the school in the last 18 months, and

has provided some effective support in monitoring and improving teaching.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have improved their effectiveness since the previous inspection. Carrying out 'learning walks', reviewing pupils' books, and regularly interviewing pupils and staff have given them a suitable overview of the school's work and sharpened their awareness of its strengths and areas for development.
- Governors are closely involved in school self-evaluation and development planning.
- A governor with specialist knowledge has helped drive improvements in provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Governors know how and why pupil premium funding is spent in particular ways, and examine with senior leaders its impact on the achievement of eligible pupils.
- Governors review and, where necessary, challenge targets for the headteacher's performance. They make clear links between the performance of teachers and pupils' achievement, and ensure that pay rises and promotion are appropriate.
- Governors follow up any concerns about pupils' welfare and ensure national requirements for safeguarding are met fully.

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	112927
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	424985

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	332
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clare Cuomo
Headteacher	Mark Booton
Date of previous school inspection	28–29 February 2012
Telephone number	01332 673823
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