

# Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School

Brunswick Street, Parr, St Helens, WA9 2JE

**Inspection dates** 25–26 September 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- The way that the school is being led and managed is inadequate. Important changes that were required when the school was inspected three years ago have still not been made.
- Standards require improvement and not all pupils make as much progress as they could.
- Teaching is not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection. Most of it needs to improve.
- Pupils often get bored and do not concentrate as well as they should in lessons because the teaching is not good enough.
- Leaders are not doing enough to ensure good teaching and progress for all groups of pupils.
- Leaders have not made sure that teaching is matched closely to pupils' abilities and extends their learning in all subjects.
- Governors have not held senior leaders to account for pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and the use of resources.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils have a good understanding of what is right and wrong.
- Pupils behave well around the school. They are polite and treat each other and adults with respect.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 12 lessons taught by seven teachers. One of the observations was conducted jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work, observed small group sessions, listened to pupils reading and observed break-time activities.
- They held meetings with leaders and managers, with the Chair of the Governing Body, with two representatives of the local authority and with groups of teachers. They also held a formal meeting with a group of pupils and spoke to many pupils in lessons and around the school.
- The range of documents examined included: the school development plan; a summary self-evaluation; documents relating to safeguarding of children; minutes of governors' meetings; and records of pupils' attendance, exclusion and behaviour.
- It was not possible to check the responses from Parent View because fewer than 10 had been received. However, the inspectors did speak to a number of parents who were bringing their children to school. They also analysed questionnaires completed by 17 members of staff.

## Inspection team

Aelwyn Pugh, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Maureen Hints

Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.*

### Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. For these pupils, the school receives extra funding known as pupil premium.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at the school action stage is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards for the attainment and progress of pupils.

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

- Improve teaching, so that all pupils make consistently rapid progress and achieve standards that are at least in line with those expected for their age, particularly in mathematics and reading, by ensuring that:
  - all teachers have high expectations of pupils of all abilities, especially boys, and provide them with challenging work
  - lessons capture the interest of every pupil, so that each one of them learns well and makes good progress
  - the assessments made of pupils' achievement and progress are accurate and are used to plan lessons that extend what pupils already know, understand and can do
  - marking gives pupils clear and regular advice on what they need to do to get better.
- Bring about immediate improvements in leadership and management by:
  - changing the responsibilities of leaders to match the current needs of the school and making sure that they all have a clear role in improving teaching
  - ensuring that leaders at every level in the school have the highest aspirations for pupils and bring about the rapid changes and improvements that are urgently needed.
- Carry out an external review of governance and ensure that every governor has the skills and training to hold the school more rigorously to account.
- Improve the behaviour and safety of pupils by:
  - making lessons interesting, so that every pupil keeps concentrating and working hard
  - recording all incidents of misbehaviour and bullying and analysing the information to identify and help any pupils who are repeatedly misbehaving or being bullied
  - producing a new behaviour policy that takes full account of all forms of bullying and providing staff with training in how to identify and deal with these.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils do not make consistently good progress in all subjects or in all ability groups. Pupils of middle ability do not make good enough progress in English and more able pupils do not do as well as they could in mathematics. Pupils' progress in reading is not as good as in writing. Boys' progress is usually less than that of girls.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities make similar progress to others in the school and attain similarly to pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs nationally.
- Teachers and leaders are fostering good relations and tackling discrimination. However, they are not successfully promoting equality of opportunity, because not all pupils are making good progress.
- In the lessons seen, the progress of pupils of all abilities fluctuated according to the quality of teaching they received. In most cases, there was room for improvement. Leaders have not brought about consistently good teaching and progress.
- The school's figures show that most children enter the school with knowledge and skills that are below or significantly below what is typical for their age. During the Early Years Foundation Stage, most children make expected progress, although the girls make better progress than boys and are therefore better prepared for Key Stage 1. In the phonics screening in Year 1, the school's marks have been above the national averages for the last two years.
- Test results at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are inconsistent. They fell in 2011 and were just below average in 2012. In 2013, according to the most recent unvalidated figures, they were still below average.
- The school has used the additional government funding known as pupil premium on a range of appropriate activities. However, children supported through the additional pupil premium funding who left the school in the summer of 2013 were still six months behind others of their age group. In reading and writing, they made similar progress to their fellow pupils.
- Progress in reading varies significantly. Lower-ability pupils from Year 1 who were heard reading had difficulty in de-coding the words in their books. However, the lower-ability Year 6 pupils enjoyed reading and were making good progress.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- At the time of the last inspection, teaching was generally good. Evaluations by the school and the local authority show that there has been a decline since then. This was borne out during this inspection where, in most lessons, teaching required improvement, although there were examples that were better than that.
- Where teaching was good, the lessons were carefully planned to take account of the varying abilities of pupils and to build on their existing knowledge. In an early years mathematics lesson, children were asked to identify missing digits in a number line. They were encouraged to talk to each other and responded well to the reminder to listen to each other and take turns. Through skilful questioning, the teacher challenged the children to think what number came before 4 or after 9. The children's interest was maintained and they made good progress.
- In a good Key Stage 2 history lesson, pupils reflected on what it felt like to be an evacuee. The teacher posed increasingly searching questions to help them develop their ideas. Again, pupils concentrated well, enjoyed the activity and made good progress.
- This level of planning and skilful questioning is not widespread enough. Teachers do not always match activities closely enough to pupils' needs. For example, in a mathematics lesson, the whole class moved to a new method of multiplication, even though several pupils were still not confident with the grid method which they were using. In this, and other lessons, the teacher did not keep a sufficient overview of the class to identify those pupils who needed additional

help and time to consolidate their learning.

- Too often teachers posed general questions and relied on answers from the keenest pupils rather than directing specific questions at particular pupils and adapting them to the pupil's level of understanding. As a result, some pupils did not keep up with the lesson and lost concentration.
- At times, teachers missed opportunities to extend pupils' learning. For example, during an outdoor writing session in the early years, staff did not spend enough time modelling the use of spoken and written language with the children.
- Pupils tended to rely on their teachers for answers and did not make regular use of dictionaries and reference materials in order to work independently. This slowed their progress.
- Marking is up-to-date in most cases, but does not always give sufficient indication of what pupils should do to improve their work further.
- Assessments made of pupils' achievement and progress are not always accurate and are not used well by all teachers to plan lessons. In weaker lessons teachers' expectations of pupils' progress are often too low and work is too easy.

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

### **requires improvement**

- Around the school, pupils are polite, well-mannered and relate well to each other and to adults. In class, however, they are often passive, especially when teachers do not involve them sufficiently. This reduces their learning.
- Attendance has improved over time and is now close to the national average, largely because of the successful work of the learning mentor in supporting and liaising with children's families.
- The single central record is securely in place, as are safeguarding policies.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and know how to keep safe. They understand what constitutes different types of bullying. Some pupils had been bullied but said that this had been resolved. This contrasted with the senior leaders' view that there was no bullying at the school. It was not possible to resolve this because the school does not keep a central log of incidents and does not analyse patterns of behaviour.
- The current bullying policy does not cover all forms of bullying, including homophobic and transphobic bullying.

### **The leadership and management**

### **are inadequate**

- School leaders have not been effective in securing the essential improvements identified in the last inspection. Attainment has fluctuated and remains below average while progress is inconsistent across subjects and groups. The quality of teaching has declined.
- Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved but only very recently. There is still a lack of coherence between assessment at the end of Reception and the beginning of Key Stage 1. Writing across the curriculum continues to be limited, both in quantity and quality.
- The school is receiving intensive and helpful support from the local authority and the Archdiocese. However, leaders have become too reliant on this and have not developed effective systems of their own for monitoring, evaluation and strategic planning.
- The way that positions of responsibility are distributed at middle leadership level is inappropriate and does not reflect the current needs of the school. As a result there is no coherent system for planning and monitoring the curriculum across the school. The headteacher and governors have recognised the need to restructure but have been slow to do so.
- Staff who hold roles of responsibility do not always have high enough aspirations for pupils and there is little evidence that they have brought about improvements to the quality of learning.
- The curriculum relies heavily on commercially produced materials that have not been fully understood by some teachers and have not been adapted to the particular needs and circumstances of the school. The topic curriculum lacks coherence and there is no clear overview

to ensure that pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of non-core subjects in a coherent and systematic way as they progress through the school.

- Pupils have a good understanding of what is right or wrong and benefit from good opportunities to develop their spiritual awareness. They are polite and treat each other and adults with respect. They are given opportunities to study a range of cultures but there were no recent displays of such work around the school.
- The behaviour policy has significant gaps that do not take full account of all forms of bullying and staff have not received full training in how to identify and deal with some forms of bullying.
- The school has not yet received its allocation of primary sports funding but governors will be drawing up plans for its use at the next meeting of the newly formed standards committee. At present, pupils have the opportunity to take part in a range of activities, during and after school, including football, cheerleading, sports skills, dance and basketball. The children who spoke to one inspector were very enthusiastic about what was available.
- Newly qualified teachers should not be appointed.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Until very recently, the governing body has not held leaders rigorously to account for the school's performance. Some governors have not been ambitious enough about levels of attendance. In contrast, the current chair of governors has high aspirations for the school, has a very clear understanding of what is needed to improve it and is using her experiences and skills to begin to introduce a number of much needed changes. However, these have been too recent to compensate for the lack of progress since the last inspection. The governing body is still not fully constituted.
  - The school does not make efficient use of resources and the high expenditure on staff is not reflected in the quality of teaching and learning or in the quality of the senior and middle leadership. Until this year, performance management has lacked rigour. The chair of governors recognises this. Governors are aware that pupil premium money is being spent but have not been rigorous enough in monitoring its impact.

## 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>	132188
<b>Local authority</b>	St Helens
<b>Inspection number</b>	427317

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>	213
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pat Peel
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kate Barlow
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 February 2011
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