

St Richard's Roman Catholic Primary School

Flapper Fold Lane, Atherton, Manchester, Lancashire, M46 0HA

Inspection dates 25–26 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
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 has serious weaknesses.

- As a result of significant staffing changes and weaker teaching in the past, the achievement of pupils generally, in reading, writing and mathematics, has declined since the last inspection and is now inadequate.
- Not all teachers have challenging enough expectations of their pupils or plan well enough to match their learning needs, especially for the most-able pupils. This causes pupils to lose interest in some lessons.
- In 2013, although pupils in Key Stage 1 made better progress than in the previous two years, the teaching of letters and their sounds is not strong enough for all pupils to make good progress.
- Although improvements have been made to teaching over the last year, not enough teaching is good or better to allow pupils to make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 and quickly fill gaps in their spelling, punctuation, grammar and number skills.
- Leaders and governors are not doing enough to check that the training provided to staff is having a strong enough impact on improving the quality of teaching.
- Similarly, not enough checking takes place to ensure that improvements to the way behaviour is managed are having the maximum impact.
- Subject leaders do not always make rigorous enough checks on pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The determined leadership has improved teaching. Attainment rose at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 in 2013 and pupils made better progress as a result of improved teaching.
- Children in Reception make good progress.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and enjoy school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 12 lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff, members of the governing body, groups of pupils and a group of parents.
- A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined the school's own documentation relating to pupils' progress, school self-evaluation and policies relating to safeguarding.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and spoke informally to pupils during playtimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors took account of 45 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspectors also considered the school's own parental survey.
- Inspectors scrutinised the eight responses to the staff questionnaire provided by Ofsted.

Inspection team

Clare Henderson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Law

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is part of a local consortium of schools which works together to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.
- There have been considerable staff changes with five teachers leaving the school in the two years since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is at least good or better by:
 - ensuring that teachers consistently plan lessons that challenge all pupils, particularly the most-able, to achieve their best and to be enthusiastic about their learning.
 - improving the teaching of phonics (the links between letters and sounds) in Years 1 and 2 so that pupils have a secure grounding in the basic skills they need to learn to read.
- Raise standards in order that pupils, particularly the most-able in Key Stages 1 and 2, achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring spelling, grammar and punctuation skills are taught and applied systematically in all classes
 - extending pupils' abilities to recall key number facts and multiplication tables and to apply them in calculation and problem-solving activities.
- Ensure that recent improvements in pupils' behaviour and in behaviour management systems are systematically monitored to check improvements are continuing and if needed make any necessary changes.
- Improve further the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, in continuing to drive forward the school's improvement by:
 - checking that staff training is having a significant impact on the quality of teaching
 - ensuring all subjects leaders always make rigorous checks on pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils' achievement is inadequate because during their time in the school all groups of pupils do not make expected progress in reading, writing or mathematics.
- Most children start school with skills which are below those typical for their age. As the result of a clear focus on developing children's reading, writing and mathematics skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress in the Reception class.
- Pupils' achievement declined in Years 1 and 2 in 2011 and 2012 and standards in reading, writing and mathematics were below the national average by the end of Year 2 and too many pupils and, in particular the more able made inadequate progress.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have ensured that the quality of teaching has improved and as a result, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 in 2013 has risen.
- In spite of these improvements, not enough pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a secure understanding of the way letters represent sounds. Consequently, pupils are unable to tackle unfamiliar words or develop their enthusiasm for reading. Furthermore, because these skills are underdeveloped and have been over time, pupils in all classes in Key Stages 1 and 2 are not fully confident in spelling new words or using them in their written work.
- Pupils' attainment and the progress they made from their individual starting points, by the end of Year 6, was below the national average in 2011 and 2012 for all groups of pupils, particularly the most-able in reading, writing and mathematics.
- As a result of better quality teaching, pupils' attainment improved in Key Stage 2 in 2013. By the end of Year 6, it was close to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, not enough pupils reached the higher levels of attainment. Pupils' achievement is inadequate because teachers do not always plan work which matches pupils' understanding or challenges the most-able to achieve their best.
- Spelling, grammar and punctuation skills are not taught and applied well enough in all lessons in Key Stage 1 and 2. Pupils make mistakes when calculating and solving mathematical problems because they are not always able to accurately recall simple number facts and they do not always have a secure knowledge of multiplication tables.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs made inadequate progress in 2012. The quality of teaching and support and care from teaching assistants has improved, and in 2013 and currently, this group of pupils now make expected progress. This reflects the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities, even though there still remains an inequality of outcomes for the most-able.
- Pupils supported through pupil premium funding in 2012 generally made better progress than other pupils in the school. The attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was below the national average for similar pupils in 2012. However, it was above that of other pupils in the school in reading, writing and mathematics by three terms. This is because the individual needs of those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are identified and support given to help them in class. The gaps in the attainment of these two groups of pupils closed rapidly in 2013. Not only did the attainment of those pupils not in receipt of free school meals improve because of better teaching, but the attainment of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals also improved so that it is more similar to their peer group nationally.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because although inadequate teaching has been eradicated and the quality of teaching is improving, currently not enough is good or better.
- Teachers do not consistently plan lessons that challenge all pupils, particularly for the most-able, to achieve their best. Often teachers' expectations are not high enough and pupils are not

always given enough opportunities to research new information or work independently.

- The quality of the teaching of reading is inconsistent because pupils, and particularly those in Years 1 and 2, do not have a secure understanding of letters and sounds or of how to use this knowledge to read unfamiliar words. Additionally, the teaching of spelling, grammar and punctuation skills are not taught and applied systematically in all classes. As a result, pupils do not make the progress they are capable of or develop a love of reading.
- In the mathematics lessons where teaching is good, pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to practise and apply basic number skills and multiplication tables to solve number problems which are set. However, where teaching requires improving, opportunities to allow pupils to apply these skills to their learning are missed.
- Teaching is best in Reception and in Years 4 and 6. These teachers have good subject knowledge, which they share effectively with pupils, their lessons are interesting and capture pupils' imaginations well and as a result, pupils in these classes make good progress.
- As a result of the teachers' drive to improve the quality of their marking, pupils are now given better guidance in how to improve their work. Opportunities for pupils to work independently, to be involved in assessing their own and the work of their classmates are also strengths in the best lessons.
- Well-attended booster sessions before school and during the lunchtime are a strong indication of the school's determination to accelerate pupils' progress and to rectify the past underachievement that some pupils have suffered as a result of inadequate teaching.
- Teachers make a strong contribution to the good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For instance, pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage develop independence and self-confidence through playing together in the exciting outdoor environment.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are adequately supported. The adults who support them work closely with class teachers to make sure that these pupils now make at least expected progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' behaviour observed during the inspection, in most lessons, the playground and around the school including in the dining hall, was mostly good and is now having a more positive effect on improving pupils' achievement. The number of exclusions has been high indicating that behaviour over time has not been good. The number of exclusions has reduced considerably as the quality of teaching has improved and through the leadership's introduction of more consistent behaviour management systems.
- Most pupils enjoy school, and generally behave well and display positive attitudes to learning. However, in the lessons which do not fully match pupils' capabilities, pupils lose interest, their behaviour deteriorates and they do not achieve their best.
- Many parents agree with this view and are happy with the level of care provided and are generally pleased with standards of behaviour at the school.
- In discussion, most pupils were certain that bullying is rare but when it occurs, it is dealt with swiftly by the teachers. Most of the pupils spoken to have an adequate grasp of the various forms of bullying that might take place.
- Pupils are proud of their school and take part in a range of activities such as acting as school councillors which allows them to present their opinions and bring about change and are developing their sense of responsibility by acting as playground leaders.
- All groups of pupils feel safe and are aware of what constitutes unsafe situations. They know how to keep themselves and others safe, for example, while using the internet.
- Attendance is broadly average and continues to improve because the importance of going to school is clearly explained to pupils and parents. Absence is followed up rigorously and good levels of attendance are rewarded with certificates and a weekly trophy for the best attending class.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, strong links with parents and opportunities, such as home

visits before the children start school enhance children's confidence and enjoyment of school.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- While leaders have successfully improved teaching and eradicated that which was inadequate, they have not yet fully ensured that the basic skills that underpin proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics are taught well enough. Additionally, they have not yet secured good progress for all groups of pupils.
- Following the improvements made by leaders in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements in 2013, more areas for improvement, such as developing the curriculum further have been identified by the leadership and carefully thought-out plans put in place. These are enabling the school to improve at a much faster rate.
- However, not enough checking takes place to ensure that improvements to the way behaviour is managed are having the maximum impact. Targets set for teachers concentrate on raising pupils' achievement and are linked effectively to training needs. However, senior leaders do not always check that the improved teaching strategies shared with teachers during staff training are consistently implemented in the classroom. As a result, the leadership of teaching has not fully ensured that the most-able pupils are consistently challenged to reach the higher levels of attainment.
- Overall, the role of subject leaders in checking all pupils make enough progress in their subject area is underdeveloped.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils' learning and enjoyment of school is enriched by residential visits and opportunities to achieve well in art and music.
- The sports funding is already enabling pupils to participate in a wider range of sporting and physical activities than was previously available. This, together with appointing a specialist teacher of physical education helps all pupils to develop healthier lifestyles and achieve well in sport. Specialist knowledge is being shared with class teachers indicating that these improvements have the potential to be sustainable.
- Safeguarding and child protection procedures meet statutory requirements.
- Good partnerships exist with the local authority and the local school consortium that work closely with the school and these have contributed well to improvements in pupils' achievement and in the quality of teaching. Nevertheless, the school clearly has the capabilities to sustain and build upon these improvements without extensive external support.
- Staff have good working relationships with parents. Most of those parents who responded to the parental questionnaire or spoke to the inspectors say they are well-informed about the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has undergone a wide range of effective training which now better provides them with the skills to question and challenge senior leaders about how well the school is performing. They are very supportive of the headteacher and staff, and share their ambition for the school to improve rapidly.
 - Governors now have a clearer understanding of the quality of teaching and of data relating to pupils' achievement and where it needs to be improved. Governors are informed about the management of teachers' performance, including that of the headteacher, and they review teachers' pay accordingly. They manage the school's finances efficiently, including understanding and reviewing the impact of the spending of pupil premium funding and of the sports fund on pupils' achievement and physical well-being.

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	106498
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	426113

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Catherine Price
Headteacher	Dawn Nulty
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2011
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