

St Francis Catholic Primary School

Mill Road, Shelfield, Walsall, WS4 1RH

Inspection dates 25–26 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
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.

- Too many pupils do not make the progress they should in mathematics and writing in Key Stage 2. Their achievement is inadequate.
- There are wide gaps in the attainment and progress of pupils eligible for free school meals and others in the school. These differences are getting wider.
- Teaching is not good enough to speed up progress.
- Teachers do not expect enough of their pupils and the work they set is often too easy for them.
- Teachers do not always use information about how well pupils are doing to make sure they get the help they need.
- Too few pupils are enthusiastic or eager learners because much of the teaching fails to interest or motivate them.
- The work covered in different subjects does too little to develop pupils' writing and number skills.
- School leaders have made insufficient progress in dealing with the areas identified for improvement at the last inspection.
- Senior leaders have not checked that the quality of teaching is having a strong enough impact on how quickly different groups of pupils learn and make progress.
- Governors have not held the school's leaders to account for the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make.
- The checking of the school's performance, improvement planning and self-evaluation are weak. Consequently, the school does not demonstrate the capacity to sustain improvement.

The school has the following strengths:

- The school has good strategies in place to ensure that pupils who come to the school with weak reading skills catch up quickly.
- Progress is good in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils are invariably polite and courteous and they help each other. They feel safe in school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons, including two that were seen together with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and visited classrooms with a senior member of staff to look at how well disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs were learning.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and one other member, two representatives of the local authority and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors, together with subject leaders, looked at the work of a large number of pupils from all year groups.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its self-evaluation and planning documents and external evaluations of its work.
- Inspectors took note of the 16 responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and considered parents', carers' and pupils' responses to the school's own recent surveys. Inspectors also analysed 19 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Michael Merchant, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Wendy Marriott

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 that are known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is broadly average. (This is additional funding for schools from the government to be used for groups of pupils, including looked after children, those belonging to families with a parent or carer serving in the armed services and those known to be eligible for free school meals.)
- There is currently a very small number of pupils who are in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.
- A high number of teachers have left or joined the school since the last inspection and a new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it helps pupils to make good or better progress by making sure that all teachers:
 - expect much more of their pupils, both in the amount of work they will do and the intellectual challenge they provide and do not accept mediocre work
 - understand the information they have about how well pupils are doing and use it to set work at the right level for all groups in their class
 - provide lessons that motivate and encourage high levels of attentiveness
 - improve the use of questions in lessons to check pupils' understanding and involve them more in their learning.
- Improve pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2 by:
 - developing pupils' calculating skills and their ability to use them to solve problems, giving pupils the chance to practise them in a range of subjects and topics
 - teaching pupils how to write in a fluent, neat style and how to present their work
 - giving pupils more interesting opportunities to write at length and at a good standard across a wide range of topics and subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders by:
 - making sure that the headteacher and other leaders keep a close check on the progress of different groups of pupils, taking rapid action when pupils or groups fall behind, and using the information about progress to evaluate actions they take
 - checking rigorously that all teaching is good enough to lead to at least good learning and

progress and accurately identifying where improvements are needed

- ensuring that senior leaders hold all teachers strongly to account for the quality of teaching and how well pupils achieve
 - using the pupil-premium funding effectively to support eligible pupils who are at risk of underachieving.
- Ensure that governors have the skills and confidence to monitor and check the work of the school. An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate because many pupils in Key Stage 2 do not make enough progress in writing and mathematics and there are wide gaps in achievement between some groups of pupils.
- Most children start school with skills and abilities below those expected for their age. Most make the gains expected of them through the Nursery and Reception class and make good progress as they pass through Years 1 and 2. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 is broadly average.
- Progress slows as pupils move through Key Stage 2 and too few pupils, in comparison with national figures, make the progress expected of them in writing and in mathematics. This is particularly true of the more-able pupils in mathematics. Attainment by the end of Year 6 was broadly average in 2011 but fell in 2012.
- Pupils' number skills have not improved enough since the previous inspection. Many pupils lack confidence in solving number problems, which means in many classes in Key Stage 2, too few attain the levels that are expected for their age.
- Most pupils make reasonable gains in understanding the techniques of punctuation and sentence structure but their writing rarely reflects real enthusiasm or enjoyment. Pupils' handwriting is not always well formed and their work is not always well presented.
- The achievement of pupils eligible for support from pupil premium funding is inadequate. Though the small number of pupils in the care of the local authority make similar progress to their peers, pupils eligible for free school meals are dropping behind. In national tests taken at the end of 2012, those pupils eligible for free school meals were nearly three terms behind other pupils in English and nearly two terms behind in mathematics. Unvalidated test results from 2013 show that this gap has nearly doubled. School records show that two thirds of pupils in Year 6 in 2013 who were eligible for free school meals made the progress expected of them in English, and in mathematics just over a half did so.
- Wide differences exist in the attainment and progress of pupils eligible for free school meals and other pupils across many other year groups. The school's tracking of progress shows that the gap is getting bigger each year. This is because the additional funding the school receives for these pupils through the pupil premium is not used effectively.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to others. The additional support provided by the school enables some to do their best. This is not always the case, however, and in many classes, these pupils do not make good progress because teachers do not consistently ensure that tasks set are suitable for their needs.
- From an early age, children gain confidence in recognising letters and the sounds they make. Pupils in most year groups use these skills to recognise and understand words so that across the school, more and more pupils are beginning to enjoy reading stories and books relevant to their age and interest.
- Staff have worked successfully to find reading activities that pupils find challenging and enjoyable. Pupils who join the school with weak reading skills are given good support and make rapid progress in their reading.
- Pupils eagerly take part in the extensive physical education and sports programme the school provides. Specialist coaches help encourage many pupils to not only enjoy sports but to see it as part of a healthy lifestyle. It is too soon to evaluate the impact of the school's use of the primary school sport funding.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Too much teaching is not good enough to secure the rapid progress necessary to improve the outcomes for pupils, especially in Key Stage 2. Consequently, by the age of 11, many pupils are underachieving, making inadequate progress and not reaching the levels of which they are

capable.

- Although the headteacher monitors the quality of teaching regularly and a comprehensive programme of training to meet teachers' professional development needs is in place, many weaknesses in teaching remain. Too much teaching does not challenge or motivate pupils or lead to good learning or progress.
- Teachers often fail to take account of what the pupils already know and can do. In some classes in Key Stage 2, pupils are often given activities that are too easy for them with the result that their learning is held back. Pupils in top set English and mathematics classes in Years 5 and 6 were seen completing work that they had covered several years earlier. Too often teachers accept work that is not of a high enough quality, and do not demand a rapid enough pace of work.
- Teachers do not use the school's comprehensive assessment data on pupils' attainment well enough to adapt lessons, or plan subsequent learning, to meet pupils' particular needs. In particular, too few teachers plan their work carefully enough to provide adequate support for those pupils working at lower levels or to set tasks that stretch the most-able pupils.
- One reason that work is not at the right level is that lesson plans are not specific enough. Lesson plans do not identify clearly what pupils are going to learn and how their success will be measured and too often emphasise the activities to be completed, rather than the knowledge, skills and understanding to be developed.
- Long-term planning does not ensure that pupils get enough practice in the key skills of number and writing. Work in other subjects does not give enough attention to these areas at a sufficiently demanding level.
- Teachers do not always ask pupils enough questions to involve them in lessons sufficiently or to check or extend their understanding of their work.
- Too few teachers encourage pupils to work independently and in some lessons, pupils sit listening for too long without being actively involved. Teachers sometimes do the thinking and the problem-solving for the pupils. As a result pupils lose interest and motivation, and can become inattentive.
- Where teaching is good, teachers convey enthusiasm and very confident relationships with their class. They use this effectively to provoke pupils to think for themselves and give clear and full responses. As a result of this lively teaching, pupils become interested in the lesson and work with energy and enthusiasm. This was clearly seen in an effective English lesson where pupils confidently worked in pairs to find imaginative ways of using time connectives (words such as 'finally' or 'just then') in their sentences.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- The behaviour and safety of pupils require improvement because their attitudes to learning are not always good and they show too little enthusiasm or eagerness for learning.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning vary with the quality of teaching they receive. In the weaker lessons, pupils are passive and unenthusiastic and their attention wanes. Where teaching motivates and interests pupils, they respond well and work with enthusiasm and concentration.
- Pupils generally behave courteously around the school and most are polite and considerate. The school's records show that poor behaviour out of class is infrequent and there have been no exclusions in recent years.
- Parents and carers feel that pupils are safe in the school. Pupils themselves say they feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for instance, when using the internet, and know how they can contribute to each other's safety. They trust in all the adults to help them if they have difficulties, either in their work, or personally.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of the different types of bullying and say that it seldom occurs in school. They also say that the staff always respond to such concerns and they have confidence in teachers to act decisively and deal with any rare incidents.
- Assemblies are used well to stress the importance of getting on well with each other and always

acting in a considerate manner. They provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect on life's bigger questions, but opportunities for pupils to think about their learning are limited.

- Most pupils enjoy school, which is reflected in the improved attendance rate. This is now just above the national average.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- The headteacher and other senior leaders have not done enough to reduce underachievement or to improve teaching, and the school has not adequately addressed the key areas for improvement raised at the previous inspection.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have not been successful in communicating their vision for high-quality learning to all staff. The quality of education provided by the school has declined since it was last inspected.
- Weaknesses in leadership remain and continue to impede pupils' achievement. The school's self-evaluation is too generous as it focuses on what the school is doing, rather than assessing and analysing the impact of its work on learning. The evaluation is not sufficiently thorough to provide evidence that new initiatives are working.
- Leaders, with the help of the local authority, have introduced better systems for checking the progress of pupils, but they have not always ensured that teachers step in quickly enough to put things right when pupils start to fall behind. They have not been active enough in checking on those groups of pupils who could be doing better, particularly those supported by the pupil premium and those who need additional help.
- The headteacher undertakes regular lesson observations but judgements have not always been sufficiently focused on improving the progress of all groups of pupils. Feedback provided to teachers has not always been accurate enough to inform them about the most significant weaknesses.
- Targets for teachers have not been rigorous enough in the past to ensure that they are fully accountable for the progress of their pupils. Management decisions about teachers' movements up the salary scale are now more rigorous but there is still an insufficiently clear link between teachers' performance and pay rises.
- The school actively tackles discrimination but its commitment to equality of opportunity is not translated into practice. There is little evidence of improvement in the outcomes or experiences of different groups of pupils, including pupils supported by the pupil premium. The achievement of these pupils, as with their peers, is inadequate.
- The school has not used its pupil-premium funding effectively to provide the right additional help for the designated pupils who are at risk of underachieving. Too much of the expenditure is not being used directly to help the pupils who require the most support to help them improve.
- The local authority has worked with the senior leaders and has provided training for teachers, support staff and governors. However, it did not ensure that the school responded purposefully to the weaknesses identified in the last inspection or improved achievement sufficiently, especially for those pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium.
- The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development adequately. Progression in reading is carefully planned for and much has been done to help pupils enjoy reading. However, the curriculum is not yet giving pupils enough chances to write about different subjects or about subjects that really appeal to them or to practise their number skills.
- The school works effectively with parents and carers to help them support their children's learning.
- The school meets statutory requirements for safeguarding.
- The school has declined since the satisfactory outcomes of its last inspection and this, together with weak progress in addressing the key issues from the last inspection, means the school's leaders have not demonstrated the capacity to improve.
- Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has not held the school’s leaders sufficiently to account for the school’s performance because information provided for governors about achievement and the quality of teaching has given too positive a view. Governors have not sufficiently challenged this information and so have not asked the searching questions of leaders as to why the school’s performance and teaching have not been better. Although governors know what the pupil premium is being spent on, they have not been rigorous in questioning the school’s leaders about the impact of this spending on the progress of these pupils. Governors are informed about the school’s arrangements to manage the performance of teachers but have not questioned rigorously enough the link between teachers’ performance, the progress pupils make and pay rises awarded. Governors are very supportive of the school.

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	104239
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	426957

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	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Gough
Headteacher	John Murray
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2011
Telephone number	01922 682583
Fax number	01922 685609
Email address	postbox@st-francis-p.walsall.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

