

# St Leonard's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Tunstall Village Road, Silksworth, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR3 2BB

**Inspection dates** 23–24 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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**

- Pupils' progress in English is not good enough.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not have sufficient opportunities for mark-making or writing when playing. Phonics (sounds that letters make) is not taught well enough across the school.
- Not enough time is devoted to allow pupils to practise their writing in other subjects. Pupils' weaker handwriting skills also slow their progress.
- Teaching is not consistently good or better. Teachers do not plan to effectively meet the needs of all groups of pupils. Pupils do not always know how to be successful in lessons and so cannot check on their own learning and progress. Time is not used well in all lessons to accelerate pupils' progress.
- Subject leaders do not sufficiently check on the progress of different groups of pupils, when observing lessons or work in books, in order to support the drive for improving pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.

## The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress in their personal development when they start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Standards in mathematics are rising as the teaching of mathematics has improved.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good and questioning is used well to develop pupils' understanding.
- Pupils really enjoy coming to school and relationships are strong.
- Personal development is at the heart of the school's work and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is robust.
- The new headteacher provides strong and determined leadership. She has put in place a wide range of improvements and these are having a positive impact on teaching and pupils' progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons or parts of lessons, two of which were carried out jointly with the headteacher and six with the associate headteacher.
- They observed groups of pupils working with teaching assistants and listened to some pupils read from different year groups in classes, including some from Year 2.
- The inspectors talked to a range of pupils, including some from the school council, about their work and play in the school. They also looked at a range of pupils' work from across the school.
- Meetings were held with six governors as well as teaching staff, including senior and middle leaders. Discussions were held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 42 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered questionnaires completed by the school about a range of topics.
- They observed the overall work of the school and looked at a number of documents including the school's data about pupils' current progress. They also studied documents relating to safeguarding, governance, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors examined a range of other evidence including school displays, its website and evidence representing the school's wider achievements beyond the classroom.

## Inspection team

David Shearsmith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Derek Sleightholme

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller in size than an average-sized primary school.
- A below average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which is additional funding for those pupils eligible for free school meals, children in the care of the local authority and children of service families).
- A below average proportion of pupils are supported at school action. A well-below average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs, although these have increased recently.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school has achieved the Royal Horticultural Society, St Johns Young First Aider and Gold Heart of Sunderland awards.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is taught in one Reception class.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection. An associate head is supporting the headteacher in implementing improvements as there is currently no deputy headteacher.

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

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - making sure that all pupils' needs are planned for and well met in lessons
  - ensuring that pupils know how to be successful in all lessons and can check on their own learning and progress
  - improving the use of time in lessons so that pupils are challenged to work at a faster pace.
- Improve pupils' progress in English by:
  - providing occasions for extended writing in other subjects that challenge pupils to write at a higher level
  - improving pupils' handwriting skills so they can work at a faster pace
  - ensuring more opportunities for mark-making and writing, through play, in the Early Years Foundation Stage
  - improving the teaching of phonics (sounds that letters make) so pupils can understand their reading better.
- Strengthen the school's leadership by:
  - ensuring subject leaders support the overall drive for improving pupils' progress and the quality of teaching; by a stronger focus on checking the progress of different groups of pupils when observing lessons and pupils' work in books.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement as progress in English is too slow. Children do not have enough opportunities to write or mark make in the Early Years Foundation Stage, when playing. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write in other subjects and have weak handwriting skills that slow their progress.
- Although the school has a systematic approach to teaching reading, phonics is not taught well enough to enable pupils to consistently make good progress in their reading. In the 2012 Year 1 phonic screening check, pupils performed well. However, this year, performance dropped to below average.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are typical for their age. They have weaknesses in their literacy skills but the school is effective at developing their speaking and listening skills. They settle them into school quickly and children make expected progress overall, although they make good progress in their personal development.
- Pupils make expected and sometimes good progress across Key Stage 1 from their individual starting points. They reach standards that are just above average overall by the time they leave Year 2. Standards are improving in reading and mathematics, but progress is too variable over time, due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Writing is improving, but not at the same rate as other subjects.
- Pupils continue to make expected and sometimes good progress across Key Stage 2. They reach standards that are just above average by the time they leave in Year 6. Standards are improving particularly in mathematics. Standards in English are not improving at the same rate due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching over time.
- Standards in mathematics are improving at both key stages as the school has improved the teaching of mathematics across the school. Standards in the 2013 national assessments in mathematics were well above average at Key Stage 1, and above average at Key Stage 2, and progress is accelerating.
- Pupils who are more able make expected progress overall. They reach standards that are above average, particularly in reading and mathematics. These pupils do not, however, always reach higher levels in their writing. They are not given sufficient challenging opportunities to write.
- The school demonstrates the successful promotion of equality of opportunity as pupils known to be entitled to the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make good progress. By the time they leave Year 6, they are almost three terms ahead of similar pupils nationally. Attainment is above average and almost in line with their peers in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make variable progress as the numbers of pupils identified have been low in the past. They currently reach standards that are above average for similar pupils nationally in reading, but below average in writing and mathematics, by the time they leave Year 6. The school has now identified 26 pupils who need additional support. This is having a positive impact on their progress.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving, particularly in mathematics, it still requires improvement. It is not consistently good over time. Planning does not always meet pupils' needs and time is not well used. Pupils do not always know how to check on their own learning when working independently, so progress slows.
- Teachers do not effectively plan to meet pupils' needs in all lessons. Consequently, the progress of some pupils slows as the work does not match their ability. In a mathematics lesson in Year 6, pupils were given the task of solving fraction word problems. Their first task was sufficiently open ended and all pupils could achieve well. Further tasks were also planned to meet their

needs and they made good progress overall. This is not true of all lessons. Pupils' progress often slows when they start individual activities that do not meet their needs. In some writing lessons, too much time is wasted and lessons do not move at a fast enough pace.

- In a lesson in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children were investigating different shapes with the teacher. The teacher effectively questioned them about shapes. They made good progress in their learning as they worked at a good pace and time was used well.
- Where teaching is typically good, teachers ensure pupils know how to be successful in their learning. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils were asked to order numbers and how to decide which the largest number was. This had a positive impact on pupils' understanding of the process and they made good progress. In a number of writing lessons, pupils were not given information on how to be successful. Consequently, they do not make good progress.
- Teachers mark pupils' work diligently. This is beginning to have a positive impact, on pupils' writing skills. Pupils are usually given a clear point for improvement and time to improve in the next lesson. Where the point for improvement is linked to the lesson's success criteria, pupils make good progress as they are challenged to reach a higher level in their work.
- Where teaching assistants are effectively deployed, they make a significant contribution to pupils' progress. In a number of lessons teaching assistants were given tasks to do to ensure certain pupils were able to work on the same work as the rest of the class, at a different level. These pupils made good progress in their learning as their needs were well met by skilful teaching assistants.

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

- Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school to work and play with their friends. They play well together in the playground and move around the school courteously and display good manners.
- The school curriculum provides strong personal development. Relationships are well-developed. The whole school is a caring place where pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced by creative activities that promote pupils' understanding.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe. They are alert to a range of different dangers that they may encounter such as fire and water and how to act in these situations. They were unanimous about feeling safe in school and stated that adults look after them well.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying. They said there is no bullying just occasional times when they may have an argument. When this happened they said adults usually helped them sort it out.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils are keen to come to school as they enjoy what they are learning about. The school has a good system for ensuring pupils attend well and this has improved pupils' punctuality and attendance.
- Pupils enjoy working together in lessons and they have good attitudes to learning. Where teachers engage pupils well they make good progress and pupils learn at a pace. In some lessons this was not the case. Time was not used well and pupils became disengaged and easily distracted. The pace of learning also slowed.

### **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- The new headteacher's drive and ambition for the school to improve has begun to secure improvements across the school. Leadership requires improvement as subject leaders need to focus more on the progress of different groups of pupils to strengthen the overall drive for improving pupils' progress through improvements in the quality of teaching.
- The headteacher is currently well supported by a very effective, full-time, temporary associate headteacher as the school has not yet appointed a permanent deputy headteacher. The school knows itself well through regular checks on how it is doing. It has already improved the teaching of mathematics. It knows that progress in English needs to improve further and plans are in

place to this end, demonstrating that it has the capacity to improve further.

- Teachers are supportive of the new leadership and welcome the range of training and opportunities to strengthen their teaching. Performance management is now used well to underpin the improvements in pupils' progress. Regular meetings regarding this are used to improve pupils' achievement.
- The school's curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the world around them. Pupils study a range of different themes which stimulate them to learn. Visits, visitors and a wide range of experiences promote pupils' curiosity. The school is using its new sports funding wisely to promote sport across the school and develop staff expertise. Sports activities are well attended and pupils participate in a range of clubs that supports their fitness and well-being well.
- The school is rapidly engaging well with parents who are pleased with the changes to the school. They love coming to the 'golden assembly' on Friday and there is good attendance at other school events. The school's website provides high quality information to support parents with their children's learning.
- The school has a growing range of partnerships which are supporting the school's improvements by the sharing of expertise and good practice.
- The school receives good support from the local authority, including a review of the school's performance and support for identified improvements.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Provides good support and challenge to the school. Governors have a good understanding of the school's and national data. They are provided with helpful information about how well the school is performing from the new headteacher. They are aware that the quality of teaching needs to improve and have recently developed a system for checking on the quality of the school's work. They understand the role of pay in driving improvement in teachers' and leaders' performance. They are keen for subject leaders to take a more proactive role in improving pupils' progress and the quality of teaching, particularly where leaders have additional responsibilities. Governors are well trained and have a good range of skills which they use to support and challenge the school to improve. They have strengthened leadership by appointing a temporary associate headteacher to support the drive for improvement. They manage the school's finances well and have revised how they spend their pupil premium funding to ensure it has more impact on pupils' achievement.

## 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>	108846
<b>Local authority</b>	Sunderland
<b>Inspection number</b>	425792

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>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	194
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lisa Gibbons
<b>Headteacher</b>	Bernie Doherty
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 September 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 553 6288
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