

# St James Catholic Primary School

Cheriton Close, Off Underwood Road, Hattersley, Hyde, Cheshire, SK14 3DQ

**Inspection dates** 12–13 November 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 do not make consistently good progress in Key Stage 2 from average starting points at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils across the school make less progress in mathematics than in reading and writing. Attainment in mathematics has dipped since the last inspection.
- There is not a structured whole-school approach to teaching mathematical skills. Teachers do not always set ambitious enough targets for pupils in mathematics. They do not always match work in mathematics lessons precisely enough to pupils' targets.
- Pupils do not have enough exciting opportunities to develop their mathematical skills in different contexts.
- Teaching is not consistent in quality and much of it requires improvement. Learning in lessons does not always move forward quickly enough. Pupils are not always clear about exactly what they are expected to achieve in lessons.
- Teachers do not always use assessment and questioning well enough to check pupils' understanding during lessons in order to respond quickly to individual needs.
- Lesson observations do not focus clearly enough on how well pupils learn and make progress in lessons.
- The role of middle leaders in checking the quality of teaching and learning is not yet well developed.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and reach broadly average standards at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. Their behaviour is good and they are kind and considerate towards others.
- Pupils are exceptionally well cared for. They feel very safe and secure, and know that they are valued as individuals.
- Parents and carers are very positive about the school and the care that their children receive.
- The curriculum provides a range of rich experiences, which contribute to pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Actions taken by senior leaders and governors have led to improvements in achievement in reading and writing since the last inspection.
- Governors are well-informed and provide strong support and challenge for the school.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 13 lessons, including one joint observation with the headteacher. They listened to pupils reading and observed the teaching of early reading skills. They observed teaching in small support groups. They also looked at examples of pupils' work to obtain a view of teaching and learning over time.
- Discussions took place with pupils, parents, the Chair of the Governing Body, the vice-chair and two other governors, representatives from the local authority, senior leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors took account of parents' feedback on the school's website networking page, recent surveys of pupils' views and 14 staff questionnaires. There were no published responses to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including data on pupils' progress across the school, the school's view of its own effectiveness and its development planning, records of the quality of teaching and learning, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documentation in relation to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Christine Potter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Shutt

Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well 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 school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school provides a breakfast club each morning.
- There have been a significant number of staffing changes, including the appointment of a new deputy headteacher, since the last inspection.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is all consistently good or better, in order to accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in Key Stage 2, by:
  - ensuring that pupils are always clear about exactly what they are expected to achieve in lessons
  - making sure that learning in lessons always moves forward quickly enough
  - ensuring that teachers use assessment and questioning more effectively to check pupils' understanding during lessons in order to respond quickly to individual needs.
- Improve achievement in mathematics across the school by:
  - ensuring that there is a structured whole-school approach to teaching mathematical skills
  - setting ambitious targets for pupils in mathematics and matching work in lessons precisely to these
  - giving pupils more exciting opportunities to use their mathematical skills in different contexts.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management by:
  - developing the role of middle leaders so that they are fully involved in checking the quality of teaching and learning across the school
  - ensuring that lesson observations focus clearly on how well pupils learn and make progress in lessons.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because progress varies across the school and between subjects. Pupils in Key Stage 2 do not make consistently good progress. Most pupils, including those who are most-able, make expected progress from starting points which are broadly average overall at the end of Key Stage 1, but too few of them make progress which is better than this. Overall attainment by the end of Year 6 therefore remains broadly average.
- Pupils across the school are making less progress in mathematics than in reading and writing. Attainment in mathematics has declined at both Key Stages 1 and 2 since the last inspection. This is because there is not a whole-school approach to teaching mathematical skills. Pupils do not have enough exciting opportunities to develop their mathematical skills in different contexts.
- Children start school in the Nursery class with skills which are well below those typical for their age. A range of interesting activities which fire their imagination, such as building a rocket from crates and tyres, help them to make rapid gains during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in their communication and social skills. By the end of the Reception class, children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils continue to make good progress across Key Stage 1. Overall attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 is broadly average, although there are variations between different cohorts of pupils.
- Progress in reading has improved since the last inspection. This is because there is now a more systematic way of teaching early reading skills. More pupils reach the required standard in reading words by the end of Year 1. The school provides extra support at an early stage for those pupils who find learning to read difficult and most of them soon catch up with their peers. Older pupils are keen readers. They say how much they enjoy reading and really appreciate the wide range of books available to them in the school library.
- Pupils' progress in writing has also improved. Work in their books shows that they use their writing skills in a range of different contexts. 'Wow' activities such as the 'discovery' on the playground of a nest of eggs belonging to a rare bird are used to stimulate pupils' writing. 'Working walls' in classrooms give pupils helpful prompts to use in their writing and pupils have opportunities to talk about their writing and discuss specific features before they start.
- Most disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make expected progress from their individual starting points. Pupils receive specialist teaching and a range of one-to-one sessions from highly skilled teaching assistants. This helps them to make good and sometimes outstanding progress in specific areas of learning. However, their achievement overall is not good because the teaching they receive in class over time requires improvement.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding make progress which is similar to, or better than, that of other pupils. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals were less than half a term behind other pupils in reading and writing, and achieved standards three terms ahead of other pupils in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013. This is because the school uses pupil premium funding well to provide a range of additional support and to ensure that all pupils have access to a wide range of activities. This demonstrates the school's commitment to ensuring that every pupil has an equal opportunity to succeed.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- While some teaching is good, over time it has not been good enough to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress, particularly in Key Stage 2 and in mathematics.
- Pupils' learning in lessons does not always move forward quickly enough because they are not always sure about exactly what they are expected to achieve when they are doing independent activities. Teachers do not always assess pupils or question them effectively to find out how well they are doing in lessons, nor do they respond quickly enough to individual needs when pupils

find the work in lessons too hard or too easy.

- Teachers do not always set ambitious targets for pupils in mathematics and make sure that work in mathematics lessons is matched closely to pupils' targets.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers have high expectations of pupils. They question pupils skilfully and challenge them to extend their thinking. For example, pupils in a mixed Year 4 and 5 class shared examples of metaphors and personification and explained how these helped to improve their writing.
- Pupils are regularly involved in assessing their own work to see how well they have done in lessons. Teachers' marking generally gives them guidance about what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Pupils say that they enjoy the chance to respond to this in 'MAD' (Making A Difference) time.
- Good relationships and the use of praise and encouragement are features of all lessons. Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons and they are keen to learn. They feel that teachers know them well as individuals and go to a lot of trouble to plan extra sessions to give them additional help with particular areas of learning that they find difficult.
- Pupils are often given good opportunities to talk to each other in order to develop their ideas. Pupils in Year 2 discussed the advice they would give to Little Red Riding Hood to avoid getting into trouble when meeting strangers.
- Resources, including the use of information and communication technology, are usually well planned and prepared. A visualiser, which projects pupils' work on to a large screen, was used very successfully to share pupils' findings in a Year 3 and 4 science lesson. Pupils were confidently using tablet technology as they investigated healthy foods.
- Teaching assistants provide valuable support for groups of pupils in lessons and also work with individual pupils on programmes that are precisely targeted to meet their needs. They are fully involved in planning for the needs of different pupils and carefully record their progress to make sure that the support is effective.

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

- Pupils are proud of their school and are extremely welcoming and friendly. They mostly behave sensibly and considerately as they move around the school. They get on well together, both when working and playing, and they clearly care about one other and are sensitive to each other's feelings. They have good attitudes to learning and work hard in lessons.
- Pupils feel very safe and secure in school. They say that adults in school look after them as if they were 'their own children'. They feel respected and valued as individuals, 'not just one of the crowd'. Pupils are well aware of how to stay safe in situations outside school, including when using modern technologies. Parents feel that behaviour is good and that the school keeps their children safe.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying. They say that incidents are very rare and are always dealt with quickly. They feel that systems to manage behaviour are consistent and fair and help everyone to behave well. The support provided by the school for individual pupils has led to significant improvements in their behaviour.
- The school has worked hard to improve pupils' attendance, which is now broadly average. The learning mentor knows pupils and their families well and has provided very effective support to help those who are experiencing difficulties. The very well-attended breakfast club provides pupils with a positive and calm start to the school day.

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

- Leadership and management require improvement because pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are not consistently good.
- The headteacher regularly checks the quality of teaching and provides helpful feedback to staff.

However, lesson observations have not focused sufficiently on how well pupils learn and make progress in lessons, and this has led to some overgenerous evaluations of its quality.

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the future direction of the school and understands what needs to be done to improve further. Actions taken have already led to improvements in pupils' progress in reading and writing. The school has been through a period of change and instability in staffing, but there is now an emerging team of senior and middle leaders who are committed to improving teaching and raising achievement for all pupils. As yet, however, middle leaders are not taking a full role in checking the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- The progress of individual pupils is carefully tracked by the headteacher and other staff. They take prompt action to provide additional support where pupils are at risk of falling behind in their learning or are finding it hard to manage their behaviour and feelings. The effectiveness of this support is monitored closely.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils reflect on the world around them and respect and appreciate differences between people. There are excellent enrichment activities, including opportunities to learn a musical instrument and a whole range of different sports. These help develop individual talents, broaden pupils' understanding of the wider world and raise their aspirations for the future. The school plans to use the new primary school sports funding to provide permanent sporting facilities on the school site.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school and the individual care that their children receive. They are kept well-informed through the school website and networking page, and 'post' many positive comments. They particularly appreciate opportunities to share in the celebration of their children's achievements in special assemblies.
- The local authority provides effective support for the school, including facilitating collaborative working with other local schools. The school values the guidance given by an independent consultant, which has helped the school to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body bring a wide range of expertise to the school and have made a strong contribution to improvements since the last inspection. They are actively involved in the life of the school and carry out regular monitoring visits. They have a good understanding of pupil progress data and know how well pupils are doing. They hold the school to account by asking challenging questions about the progress of different groups of pupils and ensure that those eligible for the pupil premium funding do as well as other pupils. They are kept well-informed about the outcomes of teachers' performance management and how these are linked to pay progression. They ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. They are fully committed to equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination of any kind.

## 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>	106239
<b>Local authority</b>	Tameside
<b>Inspection number</b>	426109

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>	155
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kevin Toms
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jackie Walker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 November 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 3683455
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