

# Saint Benedict's Roman Catholic VA Primary School

Mersey Road, Redcar, North Yorkshire, TS10 1LS

**Inspection dates** 20–21 November 2013

|                                |                      |                             |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Good                        | 2        |
|                                | 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

- Over time, pupils make inconsistent progress because not enough teaching is good.
- Teachers do not always set work at the correct level for their pupils. This means that pupils are not sufficiently challenged to achieve beyond what is expected for their age, particularly the more-able.
- Pupils make only expected progress in their writing. Too few make good progress to raise the standard of their work at a quicker rate.
- Teachers do not always understand how pupils' writing skills develop from year to year. Pupils do not see enough good writing on display to inspire them to improve their own work.
- Teaching assistants do not always make an effective contribution to pupils' learning during lessons.
- Many of the new systems senior leaders have introduced have not been working long enough to make a sustained and significant difference to pupils' learning and progress.
- Not all leaders are involved in checking on the work in classrooms to know if new initiatives are making a quick enough difference to teaching and the progress pupils make.
- Until recently, the governing body has not asked searching enough questions of leaders about the school's performance.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has quickly identified what needs to be done to improve teaching and hasten pupils' progress.
- Actions taken by the new leadership team have improved the teaching of reading and the rigour with which pupils' progress is checked.
- Pupils make good progress in their reading.
- Pupils behave well, feel safe in school and get on well with their classmates. This allows for a calm and purposeful learning environment.
- This is an inclusive school. Staff work hard to ensure that pupils with complex needs are fully supported and included in school life.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of sporting opportunities.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons delivered by 15 teachers. In addition, a number of shorter visits were made to sessions that teach pupils letters and the sounds they make (phonics), reading sessions and to groups of pupils receiving additional support outside of their classroom.
- Two lessons were jointly observed by the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to a number of pupils read, observed pupils in lessons, around school and during play and looked at a selection of pupils' written work from all year groups.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, school leaders with responsibility for English and mathematics, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) and a group of governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. A discussion was also held with the school's learning mentor and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection took account of the 37 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) that were submitted during the course of the inspection. The inspectors also spoke to groups of parents at the beginning of the school day and took account of feedback from 27 staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation including the school's own records of pupils' learning and progress, the checks made on the quality of teaching and performance of staff and those relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Lee Owston, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Margaret Farrow

Her Majesty's Inspector

John Pattinson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Benedict's is much larger than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is similar to that found nationally. 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 that are looked after by the local authority.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well below that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well below the national figure.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is currently working towards becoming a UNICEF Rights Respecting school.
- A new headteacher and deputy headteacher took up post in September 2013. There is a new Chair of the Governing Body since the time of the previous inspection.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching across the school so that it is at least consistently good by:
  - making sure teachers use the information about pupils' previous learning to match activities more closely to different abilities, especially for more-able pupils
  - increasing the opportunities for pupils to work independently, make choices about their work and think for themselves
  - ensuring teaching assistants always make an effective contribution during lessons
  - sharing the best practice evident within the school.
- Raise attainment in writing by:
  - increasing teachers' expectations of what children in the Early Years Foundation Stage can achieve in their mark making and early writing
  - developing teachers' subject knowledge of how pupils' writing skills develop as they progress through each key stage
  - providing more frequent opportunities for pupils to apply their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills in their writing, including across subjects
  - celebrating pupils' written work more visibly across the school so that all pupils know what good writing looks like and are inspired to improve their own work.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring:
  - subject leaders check on the work in classrooms so they can take urgent action if their recent steps in driving improvement are not making a quick enough difference to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress
  - lesson observations undertaken by senior staff focus clearly on the difference teaching is making to pupils' learning and progress, including for different groups of learners
  - plans for improvement include clear measures of success, broken down into steps across the year, so that all leaders, including the governing body, can check regularly if new initiatives are having a positive impact on pupil outcomes.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils make inconsistent progress across year groups because over time not enough teaching has been good. This has prevented the standard of pupils' work from rising any higher than what is typically found nationally.
- Staff have been too cautious in the assessment of children's skills when they enter Nursery. Inspection evidence, in discussion with staff, confirms that children arrive at the school with skills and abilities that are typical for their age; some do exhibit weaknesses in their physical development and early literacy skills.
- Children make steady progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage. Too few make good progress, especially in reading, writing and number work because expectations of what children can achieve are not as high as they should be in these areas.
- Pupils continue to make steady rather than good progress across Key Stages 1 and 2. Progress accelerates in Year 2 and Year 6 where teachers have increased expectations. This goes some way in making up for slower progress in other classes but, although improving, pupils only reach broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of each key stage.
- More-able pupils, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are not always fully challenged to reach higher standards in their work because teachers' lesson plans do not take full account of what pupils are capable of achieving. As a result, few pupils reach the higher levels across the school.
- Pupils say they enjoy reading and have a growing appreciation of different authors. Phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is taught well so that pupils can read unfamiliar words for themselves. Books that include only words that can be sounded out allow pupils to quickly read whole texts, boosting their confidence and motivation to read.
- Action to improve writing has not had enough impact. While pupils have a good grasp of grammar, punctuation and spelling skills, they do not use these meaningfully in their writing. Display is generally underused as a means to celebrate and model good writing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to that of their classmates. Sometimes they make even better progress; this is when teachers make sure that work is pitched at the right level for their starting points and teaching assistants are clear about what they need to do to help learning move on quickly.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to target those pupils eligible for free school meals so that they now make the same progress as their peers and the standard of their work is catching up. This is because additional teachers have been employed and training has been provided for teaching assistants to deliver high quality support programmes. By the end of Year 6, there is less than a term's difference in writing skills between pupils eligible for free school meals and those of other learners; much better than the gap found nationally. While this gap is larger in mathematics, it is narrowing over time.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Over time, teaching has not been good enough to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress across year groups and in all subjects. An increasing proportion of good or better teaching was observed during the inspection. This best practice is not yet shared with staff.
- Teachers do not always use the information available about their pupils' prior learning to plan activities that fully match their needs. Work is sometimes too easy or too hard and as a result, pupils do not achieve as highly as they should.
- Typically, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to consolidate their skills independently. Too many activities are highly structured. While this sometimes provides good support for less-able pupils, it prevents those of middle and higher ability from showing their full

potential by limiting the choices they can make about their work and the time available to think for themselves. This prevents faster progress.

- Teaching assistants provide good support during small group and one-to-one sessions outside of the classroom because they have received training in how to deliver these specific programmes. The support they provide within classrooms is more variable and it is not always effective in contributing to pupils' learning. This is because teaching assistants do not receive clear direction from teachers about how they can best support different groups of pupils.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what children can achieve, especially in their mark making and writing.
- Recent training for staff has raised the profile of pupils' mental mathematics skills. Daily practice is giving pupils new found confidence in tackling calculations and solving problems.
- Teachers are not secure in their understanding of how pupils' writing skills develop as they move through the school. This leads to similar writing tasks being completed across year groups without any additional challenge. Writing skills are taught as a separate lesson and are not reinforced when pupils write in different contexts throughout the day. This limits pupils' understanding of how to use grammar and punctuation effectively.
- Pupils receive regular feedback on their work because teachers have focussed recently on improving their marking. It now more readily identifies what pupils have done well and where further improvement is needed. Pupils speak positively about the changes and value the comments teachers make.

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

- Pupils are keen to learn and show positive attitudes to their work. This, together with good relationships between teachers and pupils, ensures a supportive environment in which to learn.
- Pupils are welcoming, polite and show kindness and respect towards adults and each other. Pupils are taught to get along with everyone in school, regardless of their differences, and understand the different needs, views and beliefs that people can have. This shows good promotion across the school of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View or spoke with inspectors were positive about the care their children receive so that they are happy and safe in school. A few parents raised concerns around bullying and the behaviour of pupils and this was investigated fully by inspectors.
- Inspection evidence shows that the school deals well with any incidents of bullying or poor behaviour. Even the youngest pupils say they understand the definition of bullying, including that relating to different forms of prejudice. Pupils acknowledge that when incidents do occur occasionally, they are dealt with quickly and effectively by staff once they are told.
- Good support from the SENCO, the school's learning mentor, as well as support from other professionals outside of school, helps to ensure that pupils with complex needs are supported effectively so they can be fully included in school life. Nonetheless, the school recognises the need to work more successfully with some parents about the successful approaches they are taking within school to tackle bullying and misbehaviour of any kind.
- Pupils say they feel safe and are well cared for in school. They say they enjoy school and this can be seen in the improvement in pupils' attendance this term.
- Pupils behave well around the school, including at break and lunchtimes and very few pupils are temporarily excluded from school because of the careful support packages put in place for pupils with complex emotional and behavioural needs.
- The school has recently undertaken a programme of work to gain the UNICEF Rights Respecting school award to support further the good work already underway around issues of respect, tolerance and acceptance of others.

**The leadership and management requires improvement**

- In a short space of time, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have proven they have the skills and determination to improve the school's work.
- Both leaders took urgent and decisive action upon their appointments to correctly identify the school's strengths and weaknesses and quickly put actions in place to improve matters. For example, pupils' progress in lessons is hastening because of actions taken to improve the quality of teaching and teachers' marking and feedback to pupils.
- Nevertheless, leadership and management require improvement because the actions being carried out have not had time to impact fully on the school's overall effectiveness. Not enough has been done since the time of the last inspection to secure consistently good teaching or ensure that higher-ability pupils achieve the best they can.
- Appropriate priorities are set out but action plans lack precision in how success is to be measured. The omission of clear, measurable steps across the year limits leaders' and governors' ability to check whether new initiatives are working and when to intervene to hasten improvement.
- The leadership of teaching also requires improvement. Until recently, leaders' lesson observations have focused too much on what the teacher is doing and not enough on whether their teaching methods are making a positive difference to the learning of different pupil groups.
- Actions to improve teaching have not had as much impact as they should because subject leaders do not check on the work going on in classrooms directly. This makes it difficult for them to know if the approaches being taken to drive improvement are making a big enough difference to pupils' progress in lessons.
- Improved performance management arrangements have quickly been put in place. Decisions about the salary each teacher receives are now based on the detailed analysis of progress made by the pupils in their care.
- The curriculum requires improvement. Pupils' writing skills are not developed well enough. While some teachers provide regular chances to develop pupils' writing skills for a range of different reasons across subjects, this is not consistent across the school.
- The curriculum has strengths in the range of sporting activities offered to pupils. An effective school sports partnership is in place locally to utilise additional sports funding and offer a wide range of competitive sports. These are well attended, enjoyed by pupils from across the school and support their positive well-being.
- Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Pupils from different backgrounds and with different needs were seen working and playing together well. Gaps between the achievements of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other learners have narrowed successfully through good use of additional government money provided for such pupils.
- The local authority has not provided useful support or incisive challenge to the school since the last inspection. Reports to the school have not offered enough evaluation of teaching or pupil performance to allow quick and effective action to be taken by leaders to rectify weaker practice. In this way, past advice and guidance has not been helpful in holding a mirror up to the school and highlighting issues that are in need of improvement. Local authority staff are now supporting senior leaders in accessing school-to-school support through a local teaching alliance.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has taken the initiative to seek training to better understand pupil progress information. This has allowed them to ask the right questions of senior leaders and begin to challenge them about the direction of the school. Governors are committed, bring a range of professional expertise to the school and are acutely aware of where they need to develop further as a group. They have not always been clear enough about the performance of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding or about the quality of teaching and its link with pay and performance. This means they have not been fully effective in holding senior leaders to account over time. More regular visits to school are now underway and information is more forthcoming from the school's new leaders to address these gaps in understanding. Governors

are ambitious to see improvements under the new leadership 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

|                                |                      |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 134706               |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Redcar and Cleveland |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 427299               |

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> | 433  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                                   |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Anthony Montague                                     |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Liz Henry  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 30 November 2010                                     |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01642 495770   |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01642 495779   |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | st_benedicts_catholic_school@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk |

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