

Our Lady and St Rose of Lima Catholic Primary School

Gregory Avenue, Weoley Castle, Birmingham, B29 5DY

Inspection dates 27–28 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
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

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders have not been able to secure the confidence of parents. Some parents have strong views and concerns which leaders have yet to resolve. Along with the many changes of teacher last year, this has had a negative impact on achievement in 2013 and has impeded school improvement.
- Governors have a good understanding of parents' concerns but do not have enough detailed knowledge about the school and leaders' actions to be able to support, challenge or address these effectively.
- Activities are occasionally too difficult or too easy for some pupils, marking does not always show pupils how to improve and teaching assistants are not always deployed effectively in lessons or small groups.

The school has the following strengths

- All groups of pupils achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is good. It is not outstanding because some aspects are not consistently effective.
- Behaviour is good and pupils say they feel safe. They are keen to learn.
- Attendance is above the national average.
- Children are taught well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and this enables them to make good progress.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons and briefly visited another nine. These were taught by all eight of the school’s teachers. Fourteen of these observations or visits were carried out jointly with the headteacher, deputy headteacher or a subject leader.
- Discussions were held with parents, pupils, governors, two representatives from the local authority, senior leaders and staff.
- The inspectors received the views of parents and carers through the 65 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, responses to a school questionnaire, written comments and documents, as well as informal discussions.
- The inspectors received the views of staff through 28 responses to the Ofsted inspection questionnaire and discussions. They also received the views of pupils through prearranged and informal discussions in lessons, before and after school, as well as at break and lunch times.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including the school’s information on pupils’ current progress, pupils’ work, the school development plan, planning and monitoring documents, documents relating to safeguarding and records relating to behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Jo Curd, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Wendy Hanrahan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized school.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are sometimes taught as separate classes and sometimes in groups across the open-plan Early Years Foundation Stage. Almost all children in the Nursery attend full time.
- Over half the pupils are from a very wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Over a third speak English as an additional language. This is much higher than in most schools.
- Almost half the pupils are entitled to pupil premium funding. This is additional funding for specific groups of pupils; in this case, those who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is higher than in most other schools. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs across the school is slightly lower than the national average. However, the proportion of these pupils in Year 6 in 2013 was higher than in most other schools.
- The proportion of pupils who join the school at times other than the beginning of the Reception Year is higher than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There was been a significant turnover and absence of staff since the previous inspection, and particularly in 2012 to 2013. Following the deputy headteacher's promotion, the school was without a deputy headteacher for six months and the current deputy headteacher had to teach full time from January to July 2013 to cover staff absence. Four of the eight current teachers joined the school in September 2013.
- School leaders manage a breakfast club from 7.45am to 8.45am each day.
- A complaint raised by grandparent is being investigated externally. Officers from the local authority are fully aware of, and engaged in, this.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that a greater proportion is outstanding and raise pupils' achievement, by ensuring that:
 - activities are varied and always suitably challenging for all pupils
 - ensure that the new approach to marking is applied consistently throughout the school
 - teaching assistants are always deployed effectively in leading support sessions for small groups of pupils and throughout lessons.
- Find effective ways to engage parents positively with the school and their children's education.

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 good

- Achievement is good. Most children start at the school with knowledge, skills and experience below those nationally expected for their age. Due to effective teaching, all groups make good progress and, by the end of Year 6, attainment is usually in line with or above the national average.
- Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge, skills and understanding below those expected for their age. They make good progress and the proportion of children reaching the expected level of development by the end of the Reception Year is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who succeed in the Year 1 screening check in phonics (the sound which letters make) was average in 2013. With the improvements in teaching this year, reading standards seen across the school are generally above average. Throughout the school, pupils have frequent and engaging opportunities to read to each other and to adults. Predictions, based on, detailed rigorous tracking, indicate that a high proportion are expected to attain the higher Level 5 in reading this year.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language generally progress well. They are well integrated into the school and engage well in learning. The practical and visual nature of many activities often helps them, particularly if they are very new to learning English.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because their needs are identified and addressed well. Some of these pupils make marked improvements because teaching assistants are well trained and support programmes effective. Occasionally, the progress of these pupils slows because teaching assistants are deployed elsewhere or activities are slightly too difficult.
- More-able pupils usually progress well. They are often given more challenging work, which helps them to progress well because they have positive attitudes and engage in tasks confidently and enthusiastically. However, at other times, their progress slows because they spend too much time in whole-class sessions going over things they can already do.
- Attainment was above average in 2012, with pupils doing particularly well in writing. Achievement dipped in 2013 because teaching was disrupted due to staff absence and change. Attainment was also lower because a high proportion of pupils in Year 6 had low starting points, including an unusually high proportion of pupils who joined the school partway through Key Stage 2. Teaching has improved since this time and the current progress of all groups is good.
- Pupil premium funding is spent on additional staff, who provide intensive support and a good level of challenge for small groups of pupils. This is often effective, driving equality of opportunity and helping to close the gap between the attainment of these pupils and that of others. However, some very low starting points meant that, in 2013, although the progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium in Year 6 was faster than others, the attainment of these pupils remained about a year behind that of their classmates in mathematics and English.

The quality of teaching is good

- Although the many changes of staff last year took their toll, staffing is now more settled and the quality of teaching is good. Teachers are particularly effective in creating a positive climate for learning where pupils are keen to do well.

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good because staff plan suitable, interesting activities inside and outside, including those which are led by adults and those which children choose for themselves. Resources are attractive, of good quality and used well. Teamwork is strong. Teaching assistants are skilled and deployed effectively.
- Teachers provide frequent and relevant opportunities for reading. For example, in an excellent religious education lesson, pupils worked extremely well in small groups, reading texts about the Nativity and discussing Herod's response and feelings towards Jesus. This very successfully contributed to pupils' literacy skills, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well as their religious education.
- Teachers explain concepts clearly and have high expectations for all the pupils. In a Year 6 English lesson on writing persuasive letters, the teacher explained concepts clearly, demonstrated these effectively, provided suitably varied and challenging activities and worked well with the teaching assistant to identify and address any misunderstandings as they occurred. As a result, all pupils made good progress.
- Pupils are positive about their learning and are quick to do as they are asked. Older pupils know their targets for learning well and appreciate that they 'learn new things every day'.
- The school employs specialist sports staff. Physical education was taught well in the lesson observed and pupils enjoy the subject. There are plans for the additional primary sports funding to be used for further training, to develop more links with other schools and to extend the range of sports offered.
- Activities throughout the school, are usually, but not always, varied to meet the needs of different groups. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are now taught mathematics in small sets organised on the basis of their ability. Activities in these sets are well matched to pupils' needs, helping the more-able to move on quickly with more challenging work and providing additional support for those who need it.
- However, activities are not always varied sufficiently and are occasionally slightly too difficult for some pupils and slightly too easy for others. Where this occurs, it slows progress because some pupils struggle whilst others spend too much time repeating work they can already do.
- Teaching assistants are experienced and well trained. They often support and challenge pupils well. Occasionally, their input is limited, however, especially in whole-class introductions to lessons. Sometimes, particularly during staff absence or turbulence, they give support in class rather than providing intensive support to small groups of pupils. As a result, these planned support sessions do not always occur.
- A new approach to marking shows pupils what they have done well and where they could do better. Pupils appreciate doing the 'gap tasks' to improve areas they have missed and recognise how much this helps them in their learning. While this is raising achievement in most classes, it is not yet consistently applied throughout the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Most pupils behave well in and out of lessons. Pupils are positive and keen to learn. Their eagerness to do as they are asked enables most teachers to use time in lessons well for

learning.

- There have been marked improvements in the behaviour and attitudes of the very few pupils who have behavioural difficulties. Pupils who have had unsuccessful starts at other schools are supported well, settle quickly and achieve well.
- A high proportion of parents and carers expressed concern about pupils' safety and felt that their children would not be able to express their views or experiences openly or honestly. Inspectors spoke to pupils in and out of lessons, at break and lunch times, over both days of the inspection. All of those spoken to said that they felt safe. The demeanour of those not spoken to suggested that they felt safe too.
- Some parents expressed concerns about racism in the school. Inspectors did not see anything within school to confirm this. Relationships between pupils, as well as between pupils and staff, in class, the dining hall and playground, appear positive and highly cohesive, thus building understanding and reducing discrimination. Records show that no incidents of racism have been reported since 2011.
- Pupils have a good understanding of various types of bullying, including verbal, physical and cyber-bullying. They say that they would talk to staff if they had any concerns and know what to do in the rare instances that this occurs.
- The breakfast club is well organised and provides a positive, settled start to the day for those who attend.
- Attendance has risen and is currently above the national average. Persistent absence is lower than in most other schools because the difficulties of some families are supported well and the school tackles discrimination well.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Appropriate artefacts, relating to faith and spirituality, are evident in all classrooms and corridors. Pupils learn about a range of faith and cultures. They are clear about right and wrong, and even the youngest help to correct each other whenever necessary. Pupils explore and express emotions and develop positive relationships with each other.
- Pupils generally try hard with their work but occasionally lose focus if whole-class introductions are too long or if work is slightly too easy or difficult.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Parental views and engagement is variable. Forty-eight parents and carers responded to a school questionnaire in July 2013. The vast majority of these were positive about all aspects surveyed. However, the majority of the 65 responses to the online inspection questionnaire (Parent View) and discussions during the inspection, as well as 40 letters and documents, expressed strong concerns about most aspects of the school. Positive relationships and trust between these parents and the school are weak and some complaints, including those against the headteacher, are not resolved.
- Throughout the inspection, the headteacher was calm, professional and positive. She has a good knowledge of all pupils and a strong focus on learning and achievement. She is well organised, proactive and proud of the pupils and the school. The concerns of parents and the turbulence of

2012 to 2013 have set the school back, however. This is particularly evident in the sharp fall that was seen in standards in 2013.

- Most leaders and managers at all levels have a good understanding of the school and of its strengths and challenges. They have been successful in stabilising the staffing situation and reversing the decline seen in 2013. Some stringent measures have been introduced to drive improvement, and not all have been popular; for example, insisting that parents consult with class teachers before coming to leaders and setting some firm and explicit guidelines on teachers' actions within school. Some parents and staff find these arrangements difficult to accept.
- Leaders have improved the school building, developed subjects and opportunities for learning and established very positive cultural events since the previous inspection. These have all helped to boost pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and cohesion in the school.
- Another positive initiative from leaders is the appointment of a full-time pastoral worker who also works as receptionist on the school's front desk. In this position, she is able to support parents and pupils and signpost them to other services. However, issues preventing some parents from effective engagement with the school remain. .
- Leaders monitor lessons frequently and provide effective and helpful staff training. They have made positive staff appointments and continually strive to improve teaching.
- Local authority officers have been frequently and heavily involved in the school over the past year. They know the school community well. They are taking actions to help resolve parental concerns and are helping to drive improvements in teaching throughout the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance requires improvement. Governors have had some training and have a good knowledge of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement through visits to the school and detailed reports from the headteacher. Governors have had up-to-date child protection and safeguarding training. Requirements for safeguarding are met: all the required systems are in place, but governors do not always check how fully and robustly these are completed. Governors have a good knowledge of how the pupil premium is spent and its overall impact but have not yet been informed of its impact on individuals throughout the school. Governors have not always asked enough systematic or sufficiently detailed questions about finance, nor do they have enough information to be able to support or challenge the school robustly. They are well involved in the annual appraisal of the headteacher but less involved in the way teachers are appraised or rewarded financially for their work. Two new highly experienced governors took up their roles this term. They are already asking more detailed questions and are leading the way for other governors to do the same. Governors are aware of parents' views, but do not have enough information to be able to address these, or engage parents effectively with 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	103443
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	427074

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	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Gary Buckby
Headteacher	Suzan O'Meally
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2008
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