

St Catherine's Catholic Primary School

Firhill Crescent, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S4 7BX

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- All groups of pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6 and represent pupils' good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make very quick progress because teaching assistants support them extremely well.
- Teaching is good and a small amount is outstanding.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the site and get on well with other pupils, reflecting the school's strong emphasis on caring for and supporting other pupils.
- They show a good understanding of how to be safe and stay safe.
- The inspirational and strong leadership of the headteacher, good support of senior leaders and the quickly developing roles of subject leaders are driving improvement in teaching and achievement well.
- The governing body's good knowledge of the quality of teaching, pupils' performance, and great commitment to the school, contribute to its good capacity for further improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching does not make sure that pupils who could reach higher levels consistently do tasks that enable them to develop the understanding and skills to do this.
- Marking is inconsistent in telling pupils what they have done well and particularly the next steps to take. Teachers are not always checking that the advice they give is taken.
- Subject leaders do not make sure pupils have regular opportunities in other subjects to practise and secure the literacy and numeracy skills.
- The quality of planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is variable and the rate of learning and development of some groups of children is not tracked so that it is difficult to have a full picture of children's achievement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 24 lessons. Five were observed jointly with the headteacher or individual members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, four members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. They also listened to pupils read and attended an assembly.
- The inspectors spoke with many pupils during lessons and break times and met formally with a group of pupils to find out their views about the school.
- They looked at a wide range of documentation, including information about the achievement of all pupils, improvement planning, pupils' work, and policies and procedures to safeguard them.
- In carrying out the inspection, the inspectors took into account the 23 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the 30 responses made by staff to the questionnaire.

Inspection team

Lynne Blakelock, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Gary Kelly	Additional Inspector
Mary Lanovy-Taylor	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than most others of its type.
- It has been extensively refurbished and accommodation for the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 has been rebuilt.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for looked-after children, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average and has risen sharply in recent years.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher is a Local Leader of Education and three members of staff are Specialist Leaders of Education. The school is part of a family of six primary schools and one secondary school, and they all work together, including in supporting the increasingly diverse needs of the children. St Catherine's also supports a number of schools in challenging circumstances and trains teachers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to consistently outstanding and raise further the standards that pupils reach by making sure that:
 - pupils capable of reaching higher levels are always given work that enables them to develop their thinking and decision-making skills and apply their skills in unfamiliar situations
 - marking in all lessons tells pupils what they have learnt well and what they need to do next, and teachers check that the advice they have given has been taken.
- Strengthen the impact of subject leadership on the quality of teaching and rate of achievement by ensuring that:
 - leaders check teachers' planning very regularly to make sure that opportunities are in place in all subjects to enable pupils to practise and strengthen literacy and numeracy skills
 - planning of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is of a high standard throughout the stage and leaders track the learning and development of all groups of children so that the school has a fully accurate picture of the children's rate of progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school. They reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. This shows that pupils make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Pupils from different groups achieve similarly well, including boys and girls who speak English as an additional language. However, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make rapid progress because the school identifies their needs very quickly and teachers and teaching assistants always provide them with very specific and well planned help.
- Pupils join the Nursery with levels of knowledge and skills that are well below those typical nationally and particularly so in speech, language and communication skills. From the time they start school, the staff focus on developing children's communication skills, within lots of different activities. As a result, the children make good progress, although only a minority achieves the early learning goals.
- In the national Year 1 check on phonics (the sounds that letters and groups of letters make) the proportion of pupils reaching the required standard increased a lot from 2012 and was much closer to the national average. This is because the teaching of phonics is taught daily and accurately. When reading in other lessons, pupils increasingly use their knowledge of phonics to build up words accurately. By the end of Year 2, reading standards are broadly average. The emphasis on reading continues throughout the school.
- Standards in writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 are improving. The school's information, teaching, and work in books indicate a much greater proportion of pupils working to expected levels. Pupils write often and at length, based on tasks that they find very interesting, and they practise spelling, sentence and number skills daily.
- Pupils supported by pupil premium money make good progress. The school allocates money carefully to meet their needs, such as for extra staffing, including learning mentors and for additional activities such as visits.
- Pupils supported by pupil premium money make good progress. The school allocates money carefully to match their needs, such as for extra staffing, including learning mentors and for additional activities, such as visits. There is a small gap in standards in reading, writing and mathematics of between one to two terms, between pupils eligible for free school meals and those who are not; this gap is closing quickly.
- The most-able pupils who are capable of reaching higher levels, do not consistently have sufficient opportunities to develop the required skills to do that. They do not do enough tasks that regularly challenge their thinking skills and decision-making skills.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils organise themselves quickly in lessons and pay attention because this is what teachers expect.
- Teachers make very clear what pupils need to know, understand and be able to do. They constantly check that pupils know how to do their work. The teachers' careful questioning of pupils was a constant feature in lessons where pupils made good or better progress.
- Teaching assistants work very well with teachers to provide exactly the support that pupils need and as a result they make rapid progress over time.
- Pupils like discussing what they are learning with their classmates and sharing their thoughts and ideas. It encourages them to be confident in expressing their views and from Nursery onwards, enables them to develop their speaking and listening skills quickly.
- The new curriculum is encouraging pupils to learn well. It is based on skills and experiences,

which pupils find very interesting. In a topic about evacuation, the pupils went on a journey, with a passport each. This brought learning alive and provoked not only pupils' increased vocabulary and knowledge of some consequences of war, but also their ability to empathise and show sensitivity.

- Some marking of pupils' work is excellent in the information it gives them about what they have achieved and what to do next. However, marking is inconsistent across the school, especially in the regularity and quality of advice given to pupils. Teachers do not regularly ensure that pupils act on any advice given to them.
- Pupils of all abilities do not regularly get the opportunity to practise the skills they have learnt in literacy and particularly in numeracy, in other subjects. When they did have these opportunities they made progress quickly. For example, in an outstanding Year 2 religious education lesson, very good development of language skills helped pupils make rapid progress in understanding stories with a meaning and how these stories can help us today in how we treat others

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The pupils like their school and look after it, keeping it tidy and respecting the hard work of the staff in keeping it clean and smart. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do a great job in clearing up their learning areas. Pupils wear their uniform smartly and with pride.
- Pupils take the responsibilities they are given very seriously. The eco-warriors for example take charge of recycling and make sure pupils understand how important it is to do this to protect our environment. Other roles such as milk monitors and members of the office job squad ensure that pupils develop important skills for the future.
- The behaviour of pupils is good and some pupils behave excellently. They all understand the behaviour policy, which all staff use in exactly the same way. A few pupils find it hard always to behave as the school expects but the staff help them to manage their actions better and learning is not disrupted.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good. Parents agree. The school is a happy place in which pupils mostly get on very well with each other. From Nursery, children develop a good understanding of the importance of behaving safely, such as not running in the classroom. Their knowledge increases as they get older, due to lessons that develop their awareness of a wide range of potential dangers, such as talking to strangers, smoking, unhealthy eating and risks on the road.
- There have been a small number of occasions in the past when words that are hurtful and based on someone's race have been used but the school has a zero tolerance of this and all pupils know that it is wrong. The school is inclusive and pupils know that they are valued for who they are.
- Pupils concentrate in lessons and show enthusiasm to learn and to do their best. For example, the inspectors saw a lot of neat, well-presented work and some super story-writing. Their classrooms are full of colourful displays, which remind them of what they need to know.
- Attendance continues to rise. It has reached an average level due to the determination of staff, the good systems in place to check attendance and parents' understanding of the link between achievement and attendance. Well-coordinated work continues, to help to ensure that it rises further.

The leadership and management are good

- The strong, inspirational headteacher has successfully overseen the doubling of the school's size. This oversubscribed school meets the diverse needs of its pupils well. Its work mirrors the caring, respectful ethos that it promotes.

- The school's capacity to keep improving is based on good checking of its work, particularly the rate of progress of pupils, including regular meetings to discuss the achievement of all pupils.
- Senior leaders support the headteacher effectively, providing a comprehensive picture of its performance through their whole-school responsibilities. As a result, more effective strategies have been developed to raise standards in writing and mathematics. Some subject leaders have detailed knowledge of pupils' performance in their subject areas and tell class teachers, who are responsible for keeping pupils on track how they can further help pupils.
- While checking of pupils' progress is a strength overall, in the Early Years Foundation Stage there is an incomplete picture of the achievement of some groups of pupils and some variation in the quality of planning.
- Leaders plan regular observations of teaching and judge them accurately. The school expects teaching to be at least good and staff who do not achieve this standard receive support to improve.
- Staff work well as a team. They say that training helps them to strengthen their capacity to do their job well.
- New teachers are helped very well by other staff and develop their teaching skills quickly. Performance targets help all of the teachers to improve their teaching, which is the school's number one priority, and where relevant, to develop their leadership skills. Most, but not all, targets are measurable and challenging and staff do not receive pay rises unless they meet all three of their targets.
- The curriculum helps pupils to want to learn and to achieve well because it is providing more exciting learning and gives all pupils chances to succeed in their learning. After-school clubs are equally popular with all groups of pupils who like developing skills in, for example, cookery and computers. The school makes good use of the different cultures of the pupils to promote pupils' good cultural, as well as spiritual, moral and social understanding.
- Primary sport funding, which is focusing on developing the staff's skills and providing extra sporting opportunities for pupils, is complementing the school's teaching about healthy lifestyles. The school's figures show that as a result of such activities, pupils' skills, confidence and understanding of the need for healthy eating and lifestyles have improved.
- The school is the hub of the community and is trusted. Parents are especially valued by the school and staff work hard to involve parents in their children's learning and to help them to support their learning. Parents, likewise, support the school's efforts by their very good attendance at parents' evenings and increasingly at workshops to help them support their children's learning in mathematics and reading and writing.
- The local authority, although not needing to provide any support to St Catherine's, values the school's role in supporting other schools, and in organising the training of teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are exceptionally well-informed by the headteacher of all aspects of the school's work and add to their knowledge through probing questioning of the school's performance. They speak confidently of the growing impact of the writing and mathematics strategies the school is using. The governors know the quality of teaching, how performance management is strengthening teaching and the consequences of teachers meeting or missing their targets. Although they do not have formal links with subject leaders, they do sometimes invite individual leaders to their meetings. The governors have had training on national data. They know the uses of pupil premium funding, although not how these pupils achieve compared to those not eligible. They help to make sure that safeguarding procedures meet requirements, including regular reviewing of policies. Finances are sound.

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	107112
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	431372

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	481
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michelle Grant
Headteacher	Fiona Rigby
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2009
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