

St Pius X RC Primary School

Gatehouse Avenue, Withywood, Bristol, BS13 9AB

Inspection dates 11–12 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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 has picked up well this year in reading and writing but it is not consistent enough for achievement to be judged good.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is not accelerating as strongly as in reading and writing because mathematics has not had the same focus as the other two areas.
- Pupils' handwriting skills are weak and they have too few opportunities to tackle and produce longer pieces of work.
- In Year 6, a small number of pupils delay learning for others from time to time because they do not settle and work hard.
- Teachers check each pupil's attainment regularly but do not make best use of this information when they plan lessons. Some groups miss out and do not make good enough progress.
- The leadership of the deputy headteacher is developing but does not yet provide a strong steer to the school's improvement or to pupils' behaviour so that it becomes good.
- Arrangements for leading the Early Years Foundation Stage and mathematics are interim. Leadership of these areas is not yet good.

The school has the following strengths:

- The interim headteacher has provided effective and focused leadership and tackled weaknesses in the quality of teaching. He has put the school on a much stronger footing as it seeks to move to good.
- Governors have a good grasp of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and they are asking increasingly insightful questions of the school's leaders.
- Teaching in Years 2 and 5 is good. Teachers keep interest levels high so pupils work hard and rise to the challenges they are given.
- There is good attention to keeping pupils safe and happy. Pupils are friendly and welcoming to visitors. They move around the school sensibly.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, including some short observations. Six out of the 16 were observed jointly with the interim headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the interim headteacher, deputy headteacher, other leaders, governors, a representative from the local authority, and groups of pupils.
- The results of questionnaires issued by the school were considered. Inspectors also met informally with parents and carers after an assembly and at the end of the school day. The results from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were not available because fewer than 10 questionnaires had been completed.

Inspection team

Margaret Dickinson, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Siân Thornton

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It has had three monitoring inspections while in special measures.
- Since February 2013, the school has been led by an interim headteacher who is also headteacher of Hareclive Academy, Bristol.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs who are supported within the class (school action) is below average. The proportion who require greater support (school action plus) or have a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- Over recent months, the school has seen an increase in pupils coming to the school with little or no understanding of English.
- In all but one class, the pupils supported through additional government funding (pupil premium) are in the majority, making the proportion well above average. The pupil premium is for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families.
- The school runs a breakfast club each morning.
- In 2013, the school did not meet the government's floor targets for pupils in Year 6. These targets set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to good or better in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in English and mathematics in other years, by:
 - ensuring teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage uses planned and spontaneous opportunities to develop children's communication skills, especially speaking
 - making sure teachers plan appropriate tasks for the less- and more-able pupils and those who speak little or no English
 - building stronger links between the work done in one-to-one lessons and the classrooms so that teachers know how to follow up these individual sessions in their lessons
 - making best use of learning support assistants in lessons so they make a strong contribution to pupils' learning
 - making sure all teachers' marking reflects the quality of the best.
- Improve pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics to consistently good, by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length
 - improving pupils' handwriting skills across the school
 - making sure pupils who speak little or no English have appropriately adapted resources and the extra help they need to help them learn English
 - drawing on some of the successful approaches that are improving reading and writing to boost achievement in mathematics
 - ensuring more-able pupils also receive extra help if they are at the borderline of achieving a better attainment level.

■ Improve leadership to good at all levels, by:

- strengthening the influence and impact of the deputy headteacher on pupils' achievement, teaching and behaviour
 - providing further coaching for the Early Years Foundation Stage to improve achievement for these children, while decisions are made about leadership for the youngest children and those in Key Stage 1 within the new academy structure
 - making sure leaders and governors investigate how the pupil premium is spent so that all pupils, including those who do not need to catch up on their learning or who are more able, benefit.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress has picked up strongly this year, particularly in reading and writing. Good progress is becoming the norm in some classes, particularly in Years 2 and 5. However, there are weaker aspects to pupils' achievement: progress is not yet consistent across classes; pupils write too few longer pieces of work; and the standard of handwriting across the school requires improvement.
- The school was required to concentrate on improving reading and writing when it was placed in special measures. Mathematics has not received the same level of attention and support. Pupils' achievement in mathematics, therefore, is not accelerating to the same extent.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage come to the school with limited skills and at a much lower level of development than is typical for their age. Their language and communication skills are particularly weak. Their achievement in this very important area is not encouraged enough and requires improvement.
- The school is good at identifying pupils who are not yet working at the right levels for their age. These pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are catching up on their learning. Most benefit from good one-to-one sessions with a teacher or learning support assistant. These extra sessions are a key factor in pupils' improving progress and demonstrate the interim headteacher's and governors' drive to enable all pupils to achieve well.
- The lower-attaining pupils do not always learn as well in class lessons as they do in one-to-one sessions. More-able pupils also miss out in some lessons when work is well within their capabilities. There is too much variation in how well pupils who speak little English achieve. The achievement of these three groups is dependent upon the quality of teachers' planning and the consideration teachers give to these groups as lessons progress. This is a key reason why achievement requires improvement.
- Many of the pupils who receive extra help are supported through the pupil premium. They often make good headway when they work individually with a teacher or learning support assistant. Extra reading sessions have been successful and many of these pupils have moved ahead considerably, developing an interest in books and becoming regular readers.
- The school is reducing the gap between the pupils who benefit from the pupil premium and those who are not eligible for the funding. The gap for pupils currently in Year 6 was too wide at the school's last monitoring inspection, in October 2013. Since then, the gap has steadily narrowed. The picture is looking positive in Years 3, 4 and 5 in all three areas; in some cases, pupils eligible for the pupil premium are doing better than the pupils who are not.
- Attainment at Year 2 and Year 6 is improving. The school's assessments show that pupils in Year 2 are on track to improve on the Year 2 assessments from 2013, particularly in writing. If pupils' progress in Year 6 continues to accelerate, and the few pupils who sometimes distract themselves and others from working hard knuckle down, there is a chance that they could reach average levels this year, which has not happened for over four years.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has improved considerably during this academic year and is one of the main reasons for the school's removal from special measures. Pupils' books indicate teaching is good in Years 2 and 5. This shows the school has capacity from within to build upon these strengths so that good teaching becomes more the norm across the school.
- Not all teachers take good account of what they know about pupils' levels of attainment to plan work at the right level. In one lesson, the teacher chose a text that was far too hard, so many of the pupils could not do the task. In another spelling lesson, all pupils were given the same sheet yet some were two years behind where they should be in their writing, and others a year ahead. As a result, more-able pupils switched off and less-able pupils were left unsure. Pupils who

speaking little English struggle considerably when teachers have not given enough thought to how they will amend their teaching and resources.

- Some teaching, in both English and mathematics, is adapted well as the lesson progresses, through the teachers asking well-crafted questions, checking that all understand, or sensing the moment to bring in an extra level of difficulty. In these lessons, the teachers' high expectations and drive really lead learning. As a result, pupils concentrate and thrive.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage covers the required main areas of learning adequately. Children's efforts and achievements are recorded in some detail, providing a helpful record of each child's learning. Planned and spontaneous opportunities to encourage children to talk and develop their communication skills are often missed by the teacher. At times, the teacher holds back and does not guide children's learning and development sufficiently.
- Teachers do not always make the best use of learning support assistants by making sure they are very clear about what they need to do to support pupils' learning. In the most effective lessons, teachers manage this valuable additional resource well. Consequently, teaching assistants make a clear difference to pupils' learning.
- Pupils' books are well marked in some classes, particularly in Years 2, 3 and 5. Here, the teachers' marking helps to move on pupils' learning. Teachers write comments which point pupils in the right direction because they provide helpful tips and advice. This good practice is not consistent across the school and some teachers' comments are not as supportive, being scant and sometimes overly abrupt.
- The quality of teaching in the sessions where adults work with individual pupils is good. The sessions are well planned and focus on specific points that pupils need to work on to catch up in either their writing or reading. Staff encourage pupils to persevere and praise their efforts. While in special measures, less attention has been paid to helping pupils catch up in mathematics and, more generally, to help the more-able pupils reach their full potential.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Most pupils conduct themselves well throughout the school day and have good attitudes to their learning. The majority of pupils show respect for the school premises, facilities and equipment and wear their uniform with pride. They move around the school sensibly and behave well on wet days and at the end of the school day.
- In Year 6, a small number of pupils take up too much of the teacher's time when they refuse to do what they are asked. Learning has to stop, creating an opportunity for copycat behaviour, while other pupils become frustrated that learning cannot continue. The same Year 6 pupils, with a few others, cause problems at playtime when they chase younger children and use swear words. Some Year 5 pupils, who behave exceptionally well for their class teacher, change their behaviour when they have a visiting teacher.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know what to do if they are upset, and say they can trust the adults in school to deal with any issues straight away.
- Through lessons, assemblies and advice, pupils are made aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying and bullying related to prejudice. Older pupils talked openly about how using the word 'gay' in a jovial way may hurt others' feelings. They discussed this together in a mature and sensible way. All Year 6 pupils were very respectful when watching a video about a man who had significant disability.
- Pupils who have recently joined the school and who are learning English for the first time are welcomed and valued by others. Pupils told the inspector that it is 'exciting' to have such a mix of nationalities in the school.
- Attendance is improving in response to the school's constant drive for better attendance. Attendance so far this year, in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, is on track to be at or above the national average. Lower down the school, attendance is not picking up as strongly despite the school's best efforts to dissuade parents and carers from taking holidays in term time and keeping their children away from school unnecessarily.

The leadership and management require improvement

- The interim headteacher has focused firmly on the main weaknesses facing the school while in special measures. He has challenged teaching and aspects of leadership that have not been good enough, while supporting staff with training and coaching to help them develop the skills and confidence they need. Teachers' performance has been managed effectively, during his time in the school, to put the school on a much stronger footing as it seeks to move to good.
- Soon after he arrived, the interim headteacher set up a process for checking pupils' progress rigorously and assuring himself that teachers' assessments were reliable. Challenging targets have been set for pupils to reach by the end of this year in reading, writing and mathematics. The interim headteacher promotes a positive ethos and culture in seeking to make the school a place where pupils are expected to do well, to put them in a good position for their future.
- The interim headteacher has been astute in drawing upon the right support from Hareclive Academy to improve the school. Brave decisions have been made to stop consultancy support if it has not been right for the school. Coaching has strengthened the quality of leadership in English, which is now having a clear impact on pupils' achievement in reading and writing.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has improved considerably since the appointment of an experienced leader for this area, from September 2013. These pupils' needs were quickly identified and a range of support sessions put in place. The various programmes are checked rigorously to make sure the time is invested well and they make a clear difference to pupils' learning.
- The leadership of the deputy headteacher, while developing, is still at an early stage. This leader's impact and influence on the school's improvement is limited. One area of responsibility is pupils' behaviour. Leadership of behaviour is not having enough effect on the pupils who are most challenging and who affect others' learning on a regular basis.
- Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and mathematics is not established well enough and is being covered temporarily by the senior team.
- The interim headteacher has allocated the new sports funding in a range of ways to encourage greater participation in sport and promote healthy lifestyles. These include a sports partnership with the city's football club and transport to competitions. Pupils enjoy the sessions taken by specialist coaches and are enthusiastic about the sport and physical education they do in school. Many of them attend sports extra-curricular activities in physical education after school.
- The local authority has monitored the school closely while it has been in special measures and worked successfully with the interim headteacher and governors to provide both support and challenge.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governance of the school has shown marked improvement since the last monitoring inspection in October 2013. The new Chair of the Governing Body is bringing her expertise and experience in education to bear and she is well supported by a strong core of governors. Meetings have been focused sharply on the key areas the school needed to improve. Governors have become more knowledgeable about the quality of teaching and how well pupils are achieving. In a relatively short time, they have set up different ways of finding out for themselves how the school is improving through visits, for example, or requesting reports from teachers with leadership responsibilities. Governors are aware of the school's relatively weaker areas and discuss these from a position of knowledge while not shying away from asking challenging questions of leaders. Governors know how the pupil premium is being spent for the pupils who need to catch up. They have not yet given consideration to how it is being allocated to boost the achievement of the eligible pupils who do not receive extra help or who are more able.

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	109252
Local authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	432502

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	152
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Olechno
Headteacher	Mike Colcombe (interim headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	October 2012
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