

St Stephen's Catholic Primary School, Skipton

Gargave Road, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 1PJ

Inspection dates

26–27 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Achievement is inadequate. Standards declined at the end of Year 6 in 2012 and 2013. Too many pupils are underachieving because the work set for them does not take account of what they already know. In Key Stage 1, teachers do not capitalise on the firm foundations laid and the good progress children have made by the end of the Reception Year.
- Teaching is inadequate because it is not securing the progress pupils are capable of over time for all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and the most able.
- The teaching of phonics (linking sounds and letters) is inadequate. Too many pupils leave Key Stage 1 having failed to reach the expected standard in the phonics check in either Year 1 or Year 2.
- Behaviour requires improvement because pupils often lose concentration and their enthusiasm and attention wanes in lessons that are not well planned.
- Pupils' attendance fell dramatically in 2013.
- Leaders do not provide the direction needed to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement.
- Generous learning support is not having a positive impact on pupils' achievement and its impact is not checked carefully enough.
- Systems to record, analyse, evaluate and report on the performance of staff and pupils are inadequate. Consequently, senior leaders' assessment of the school's performance is inaccurate and governors are not aware of the decline in the school's effectiveness.
- Governors do not do enough to hold senior leaders to account.
- The school does not have the capacity to identify the correct priorities for improvement without external support and training.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are well cared for and feel safe.
- Pupils take part in a wide range of sports.
- Most pupils are fluent, confident speakers who express their knowledge, understanding and ideas enthusiastically to adults and each other.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 in response to a complaint made to Ofsted which raised serious concerns. The complaint was deemed to be a qualifying complaint and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector decided that an inspection of the school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 should take place to follow up the whole-school issues that were raised. Inspectors sought to establish whether:
 - safeguarding procedures are adequate, including the response to pupils presenting poor behaviour
 - suitable adjustments are made to behaviour-management procedures according to the pupils' needs and disabilities
 - staff are suitably trained and able to seek advice and support in respect of behaviour management and safeguarding procedures when required
 - leaders and the governing body are effective in monitoring and evaluating policy and practice for behaviour management and safeguarding within the school.
- Inspectors visited 11 lessons and observed seven teachers and a higher-level teaching assistant. The inspection team listened to a selection of pupils reading and an inspector and the Key Stage 2 literacy coordinator visited every class together to look at pupils' writing and observe the teaching of phonics.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, the Chair and three other members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in lessons and at break times about behaviour and safety and observed their behaviour around the school. They also spoke to pupils formally about their learning and life at school.
- Inspectors met with 27 parents and carers and took account of the small number of written comments they received from parents. In addition, they looked at the online questionnaire Parent View, but there were only four responses, too few to allow an analysis.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documents relating to the school's tracking and assessment of the current progress and standards of pupils; the school's checks on the quality of teaching; records relating to behaviour, attendance, accidents and safeguarding; and a selection of minutes from governing body meetings. They also reviewed the work in pupils' books and the reports and reviews from the local authority.

Inspection team

Wendy Ripley, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lee Owston

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

Information about this school

- St Stephen's is an average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- A small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language and a few join the school speaking little or no English.
- The proportion of pupils of Gypsy/Roma heritage is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well-below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs varies considerably in each year group as does the proportion of children of minority ethnic heritage or who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well-below average. The pupil premium is extra government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, are looked after by the local authority or whose parents are serving in the armed forces.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets out the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good and enables all pupils in all subjects, especially those in Key Stage 1, to be challenged in their learning and reach their full potential by:
 - eradicating inadequate teaching
 - ensuring activities are planned to sustain pupils' enthusiasm and concentration and give rise to fewer opportunities for pupils to drift off task and misbehave
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially when moving from the Early Years Foundation Stage into Key Stage 1
 - ensuring teachers take full account of what pupils already know and can do so that activities challenge them to reach their full potential
 - adapting the school's approach to the teaching of phonics (the links between letters and sounds) so that pupils learn new sounds quickly and are given books that allow them to put into practice what they have learned
 - providing high-quality professional development and training for staff on how pupils' literacy and numeracy skills develop from year-to-year and to support and develop the skills of all teachers, especially those whose practice is not yet good

- rapidly improving pupils' spelling, handwriting and the presentation of their work
 - ensuring pupils can recognise good or better writing so that they are motivated and encouraged to apply the same principles in their own work
 - sharing the best practice evident within the school more widely so that all teachers can learn from the best and improve their skills
 - addressing the inconsistencies evident in teachers' marking and feedback so that pupils more readily address their errors and misconceptions
 - ensuring that the activities children choose for themselves in the Early Years Foundation Stage are sufficiently challenging, especially for those who are most able, so that children make even more rapid progress in their learning and play.
- Improve behaviour and attendance so that they are at least good by ensuring that:
- swift action is taken to implement the strategies and actions arising from the external review of behaviour and attendance
 - senior leaders review and evaluate the impact of actions already taken to improve behaviour, and make sure that the pupils' views are listened to and considered
 - all instances of reported bullying are followed up thoroughly and monitored closely to prevent them from reoccurring and to reassure pupils and parents.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
- ensuring that middle leaders clearly understand their roles and responsibilities and are able to fulfil them
 - taking swift and effective action to improve the quality of information used to check pupils' progress; analysing this information rigorously to provide an accurate assessment of the school's performance
 - reporting rigorously and robustly on the progress made by different groups of pupils, including those supported by the pupil premium, and rapidly identifying individuals and groups of pupils at risk of underachievement
 - monitoring the performance of teachers in accordance with *the National Teachers' Standards*
 - checking the quality of teaching and learning more closely to ensure all staff meet the expected professional standards and are held to account for closing gaps in pupils' achievement
 - analysing and evaluating the effectiveness of school initiatives and the impact of the additional support provided to individuals and groups of pupils
 - ensuring governors provide robust challenge for leaders and carry out and commission their own checks rather than relying solely on the headteacher's view.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.
- An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Wide variations in the rate of pupils' progress between different year groups has meant that standards have declined and achievement for all pupils over time is inadequate.
- Lesson observations, scrutiny of work and listening to pupils read, show that the achievement of current pupils is too variable. Pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills are not being developed consistently well or at an appropriate rate. Many pupils are losing ground as they move through the school, taking into account what they already know and understand. This means that too many pupils are leaving the school with skill levels, especially in writing, that are too low for the demands of secondary education.
- Children start school in the Nursery with skills and abilities that are generally typical for their age. The few children who are learning English as an additional language or who are struggling with their language and communication skills receive appropriate help and support. Almost all children enjoy their learning and play and make good progress so that the proportion of children reaching the expected level of development for their age is above that seen nationally. As a result children enter Year 1 well prepared for their next steps in learning.
- In the most recent teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, pupils' performance in mathematics declined, although standards in reading, writing and mathematics were not significantly different from the national picture. However, given their starting points, pupils make inadequate progress from Year 1 to the end of Year 2.
- In the most recent national tests at the end of Year 6, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were not significantly different from the national picture, but the trend over time is one of decline in every subject. Widening gaps are evident between the performance of boys and girls and different groups of pupils within the school and in comparison with their peers nationally. Similarly wide gaps were also evident in pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling skills.
- Pupils want to read and show enthusiasm for an appropriately wide-range of books by both classic and contemporary authors, but they do not possess the skills to read independently. This is because of weaknesses in the school's approach to the teaching of phonics. Only around one third of pupils reached the standard in reading expected of a six-year-old in 2012 and 2013. This represents inadequate progress from the above-average reading abilities evident at the end of Reception for these pupils.
- The most able pupils are not always challenged to reach their full potential, especially across Key Stage 1. Over time, this has resulted in fewer pupils than found nationally reaching the higher levels of which they are capable.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do not make enough progress. While teaching assistants and other resources are deployed generously, they are not having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The school does not make careful enough checks in order to understand why the support being provided is not having the desired impact.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals make the same variable progress and attain standards similar to their peers in the school in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6. When compared to their peers nationally, attainment gaps for pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support and many other groups of pupils at St Stephen's are widening year on year.
- Pupils are benefiting from the additional sports funding from the government because they are able to participate in a wider variety of sports and activities through improved clubs and lessons. The school has several teams that compete in local competitions and events which pupils enjoy.

The quality of teaching**is inadequate**

- The impact of teaching on pupils' progress over time is inadequate and this has resulted in the underachievement of a significant proportion of pupils. Too little teaching is good or outstanding to enable pupils to reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Teachers are not provided with sufficient reliable assessment information in order to identify the needs of different groups of pupils effectively. This means teachers are not able to judge what levels pupils are working at and build on earlier learning appropriately when planning lessons. Consequently, tasks are not always adjusted for different ability groups, and some pupils find work too easy, especially in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils are not clear about their targets. Teachers' planning and the targets they set do not focus sufficiently on addressing specific weaknesses, particularly in reading and writing.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics, especially in Key Stage 1, is inadequate. In reading and writing in particular, too many pupils are covering the same ground. As a result their progress regresses and their motivation and engagement wane. The reading books pupils receive to practise the sounds they have been learning are read with ease. Teachers do not change them quickly enough so that their reading progresses at an appropriate rate. Pupils see too little good quality writing, either in lessons or on display, to motivate them to achieve more highly in their own work.
- Staff are not always clear how pupils' skills should develop from year-to-year and this results in low expectations of what pupils can achieve and the next steps being wrongly identified. As such, all too often pupils complete work which is below the level of their capability. This contributes significantly to the underachievement at Key Stage 1.
- The quality of marking and feedback to pupils is inconsistent. While all teachers give appropriate praise to motivate their pupils to achieve more, it is often very general and does not identify precisely where pupils have achieved success and what they need to do next. This makes it difficult for pupils to know what aspect of their work they should continue and where further work is needed. Comments to address identified misconceptions or errors, such as an incorrect calculation in mathematics or clumsily phrased sentence in pupils' writing, are not worded well-enough.
- Some good teaching does exist, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 6, but this is not routinely shared. There are wide variations in the quality of teaching across the school. These inconsistencies are not addressed because they are not evident or transparent to senior leaders, who are overly positive in their views and do not link the decline in standards and progress over recent years to a decline in the quality of teaching. This leads to a lack of specific training and professional development and poor practice persists as a result.
- Where teaching is good work has often been specifically tailored to address gaps in pupils' knowledge and no time is wasted in moving learning even further forward when the teacher recognises that progress has been made and understanding secured. This does not impact as much as it should on overall outcomes by the end of Year 6 because it is not a consistent feature of teaching over time or for different classes. Also, deficits in pupils' knowledge and understanding from Key Stage 1 need to be addressed in Key Stage 2.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good because teachers take account of children's needs and interests to plan activities that engage and enthuse them. Less care is taken in planning activities that children choose for themselves. While children still make good gains in their learning, this prevents them from making even greater progress, especially for those who are most able.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**requires improvement**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. The vast majority of pupils are compliant with their teacher's instructions and diligently complete the tasks set, even when they pose little or no challenge. However, learning slows when activities are too easy and cover ground that pupils

have already mastered because some pupils disengage and are not productively occupied.

- National data shows that in the last academic year attendance fell to 92%, placing St Stephen's among the lowest performing schools nationally on this measure. At the same time, the school's records show that the number of incidences of poor behaviour and exclusion rose. The school was slow to respond to these issues and does not have a clear understanding of why this occurred. A number of strategies have been implemented in the academic year to date and attendance is now showing signs of improvement.
- Typically, pupils are welcoming, polite and courteous, for example, by holding doors open for adults or saying 'hello' to those they pass in the corridor. They communicate confidently with teachers and friends alike and, particularly in the older classes, have the ambition to do well. Pupils in Year 6 are clear about what they want to achieve by the end of the year though they are less secure in how they will achieve the smaller steps to get there successfully.
- Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and understand the school's 'traffic light system' of rewards and sanctions. Pupils appreciate that good behaviour will be rewarded and poor behaviour will have consequences, including loss of time in the school's 'red room'. For a significant minority of pupils, this does not pose a sufficient deterrent to change their behaviour. Teachers are not consistent in their application of this level of sanction. While some pupils lose time for shouting out or talking with friends during lessons, others are given the same punishment for more serious offences. Pupils are aware of these inconsistencies which they say are 'unfair'.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. While pupils say that they feel safe in school and are knowledgeable about the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying, they acknowledge that there is sometimes some name-calling in class or on the yard and that this is linked to silliness and falling-out among friends. Some pupils recall incidents when this name-calling is as a result of someone being different. Most are confident that when they let their teachers know about such incidents that they are dealt with to their satisfaction. The breakfast club provides a safe, nourishing start to the day.
- Senior leaders do not analyse the incidents of poor behaviour, accidents or bullying with rigour. This means they are unaware of any potential trigger points or times of the day where issues are most prevalent. A new behaviour council, consisting of staff, parents, governors and pupils has been arranged to discuss how this aspect of the school's work could be improved. One of the first tasks being undertaken as a result is to improve the opportunities available for pupils at lunchtime. This includes training older pupils to be playground leaders.
- In discussions with inspectors, parents were typically very supportive of the school and very positive about behaviour and safety. Most recognise that the 'traffic light system' is leading to improvements to behaviour overall but a few did question whether the school went far enough in dealing with pupils whose behaviour was not improving and beginning to impact on the learning of others. The school does utilise fixed-term exclusions as a more serious consequence for pupils who exhibit particularly challenging behaviours. As such, over the last year, there have been a higher proportion of fixed-term exclusions than found nationally.
- Pupils are keen to take advantage of the extra-curricular activities. The wide range of sports activities is keenly supported. Pupils' experiences at school contribute well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The leadership and management

are inadequate

- Senior leaders and members of the governing body do not have an adequate explanation of, or understanding about, the reasons behind the school's decline in recent years. This means that shortcomings are not recognised or tackled with the vigour they warrant. Consequently, senior leaders and members of the governing body do not demonstrate the capacity necessary to secure rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and the progress made by individuals and groups of pupils.
- Systems to record, analyse and report on the performance of pupils and the impact of the

school's work are inadequate. Planning is weak and few targets have been set for improvement; these are not incisive or challenging enough to bring about improvement. As a result, senior leaders' assessment of the school's performance is inaccurate.

- Middle leaders who have recently been given responsibility for subjects and key stages are not effectively supported or provided with the necessary tools to undertake their roles sufficiently well. As a result they have not made plans to implement changes or set measures of success.
- The leadership of teaching is weak. Checks carried out to judge the quality of teachers' work and the rate of pupils' progress are inadequate. This is because senior leaders do not link the progress pupils make over time to the quality of their learning through the teaching they receive. Feedback given to staff on their performance is vague. The school does not have an effective professional-development programme for teachers.
- The school's systems for managing teachers' performance are inadequate and do not place sufficient emphasis on the quality of teaching in accordance with the *National Teachers' Standards*. Performance-management targets are not specific enough to ensure that teachers and their assistants understand their roles and responsibilities, or their accountability for securing rapid improvement in closing the gaps in the achievement of pupils.
- The curriculum is not well enough developed to meet the needs of all pupils. This is especially so in the teaching of phonics and for those pupils who are more able, disabled, or who have special educational needs. The school does not tolerate discrimination in any form. However, it does not provide equality of opportunity for its pupils because it does not accurately identify gaps in the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils, and too many underachieve.
- The pupil premium funding has been used for a variety of purposes and the new sports funding is providing pupils with specialist tuition in physical education. However, the school does not rigorously monitor the impact of these initiatives on the performance of pupils and was not able to provide accurate reports to demonstrate that these funds are used effectively.
- Local authority officers were invited by the school to conduct a review of behaviour and another of attendance. The reviews provided clear and appropriate guidance and actions to bring about improvement but the school has yet to act on these recommendations. Aside from these activities, local authority involvement with the school has been very limited. This is largely because senior leaders and governors were not keen to keep up a relationship with the local authority and felt they did not need to do so because the school had been judged to be outstanding at its last inspection. The decision not to engage with the local authority has compounded the decline in standards and teaching.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors do not have an accurate understanding of the school's weaknesses. They have been too reliant on the overly-generous and inaccurate reports of the headteacher and have not questioned the content of these sufficiently. As a result they are not fully aware of the extent of the decline in pupil outcomes and do not associate the dip in results to weaknesses in the quality of teaching.
- While governors bring a range of relevant skills and expertise, they do not use them as effectively as they could to challenge the school to be better. Few governors visit the school to see it at work. Those that do visit gather information but do not use it as the basis to question practice because they are not made aware of what is expected. For example, governors do not keep a close eye on how additional money is being spent or whether it is making a difference.
- Governors have not been sufficiently involved in linking teachers' pay to the performance of their pupils, setting targets for monitoring the school's performance or monitoring the extent to which these are met.
- Governors do not ensure that pupil premium funding information is readily available for parents and do not check rigorously to see if this money is making a big enough difference to the pupils it is meant to support. They do not know whether the additional sports funding and the pupil premium funding are being used well because they do not receive information that links spending to the standards and progress pupils achieve.
- Governors ensure that safeguarding policies and child-protection procedures meet statutory requirements.

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	121640
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	440863

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Molloy
Headteacher	Peter Thompson
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2012
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Email address	headteacher@st-stephens.n-yorks.sch.uk

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