

St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Highfield South, Rock Ferry, Birkenhead, Merseyside, CH42 4NE

Inspection dates 15–16 May 2014

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Between Years 1 and 6 pupils' progress in writing and mathematics is not consistently good across the school. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.
- Although improving, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and 6 is below average. Too few pupils reach the higher levels of attainment.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good. Tasks and activities are not set at the right level to challenge all pupils, including the most able, to achieve to the very best of their ability.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough.
- The quality of marking varies, and does not always indicate to pupils how they can take the next steps in their learning.
- There are too few opportunities to use writing and mathematics skills in other subjects.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to produce extended pieces of written work and to practise their writing skills across the subjects.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical problem-solving skills.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and senior leaders have taken decisive action to ensure that the quality of teaching is continually improving.
- Key appointments in teaching and leadership have been made which have helped to raise standards and rapidly improve pupils' attendance.
- Pupils' progress is improving with more now making good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They enjoy coming to school and say they feel safe.
- The teaching of phonics (the link between letters and the sounds they make) has improved and so pupils now do well in reading.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved and, as a result, children make good progress.
- Parents and carers are very positive about the school and say that they are well informed.
- Governors know their school well and are clear about their roles and responsibilities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons or parts of lessons, as well as the teaching of small groups of pupils, and sessions aimed at helping pupils to learn to read. Two observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read from Years 2, 3, 5, and 6, and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised during lessons and separately in conjunction with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, to enable the responses to be viewed. Inspectors held informal discussions with parents at the beginning of the school day and held a meeting with 12 parents. Inspectors also took account of 29 questionnaires completed by members of staff.
- A meeting took place with a representative from the local authority and the school's improvement associate.
- A meeting was held with three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Various school documents were examined. These included: records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching; reports to the governing body, data on pupils' progress, external evaluations of the school's work, the school's review of its own performance, development plans, records of pupils' attendance, behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Lenford White, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Fann

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is almost twice the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children that are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, or who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The majority of teachers have been appointed since the previous inspection. This includes a new deputy headteacher, a family partnership worker and three newly qualified teachers. In addition to this, the school's senior leadership team and governing body have been reorganised. A number of refurbishments have taken place and the school has a new reception area and additional office space.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, and in-so-doing improve pupils' achievement, particularly in Years 1 to 6 by:
 - ensuring that expectations of what pupils can achieve are always high
 - ensuring that tasks and activities are always set at just the right level to challenge all pupils, including the most able, to achieve to the very best of their ability
 - making sure that pupils' books are consistently marked well and that teachers always indicate how pupils can take the next steps in their learning.
- Raise standards in mathematics and writing even further by:
 - providing as many opportunities as possible for pupils to use and their skills in writing, including by producing extended pieces of written work, across all subjects
 - making sure pupils apply their mathematical skills across different subjects and are given more opportunities to solve problems.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The achievement of pupils, although improving, is not yet good. Between Years 1 and 6, pupils' progress in writing and mathematics is too variable between the year groups. Standards of attainment by the end of Year 2 and 6 in reading, writing and mathematics have been below average in recent years. School data and inspection evidence shows that attainment for most pupils is now improving quickly, particularly in reading.
- Children enter Nursery with skills and abilities which are well below those expected for their age. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved. Good teaching, care and support now ensures that children make good progress. The majority now enter Year 1 with skills and abilities which are typical for their age.
- Between Years 1 and 6, variations in the quality of teaching have not enabled pupils to make consistently good progress. Although improving, with more pupils now making good progress particularly in Years 1 and 5, pupils' progress in mathematics and writing remains uneven.
- Achievement in reading is good. In Year 6 in 2013 for example, an above average proportion of pupils made progress at more than the expected rate. The school's renewed focus on reading has really excited pupils and has introduced them to a wide range of authors and writing styles. Pupils who read to inspectors read regularly and could name a good variety of authors. Less able readers used their phonic skills well to break-down, sound-out and read unfamiliar words. Standards in reading across the school are improving quickly.
- Although achievement in writing and mathematics is also improving, it is doing so at a steadier rate than in reading. Improvements to the way pupils are taught to write is raising the quality of pupils' writing. However, achievement is sometimes held back because pupils are not given enough opportunities to use their writing skills across the various subjects they are taught or to produce longer pieces of writing. In mathematics, pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they enjoy their learning. However, pupils' work in their books reveals that they do not have enough opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge or to solve mathematical problems.
- The achievement of different groups of pupils is improving. Meetings held each half term to review achievement ensures that any pupils or groups of pupils who may be falling behind are quickly identified and additional support put in place. This approach has been particularly effective for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, who make good progress.
- The most able pupils are increasingly given additional tasks and activities which challenge them. However, they do not always achieve to the very best of their ability because work is still sometimes too easy. As a result, too few pupils reach the higher levels of attainment.
- In Year 6 2013, the attainment of pupils supported though the premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, was about two terms ahead of their classmates overall in reading, writing and mathematics and in-line with similar pupils nationally. Data from pupils currently across the school indicate that progress of eligible pupils is now speeding up. However, their attainment is, on average, approximately two terms behind that of their classmates and so their achievement requires further improvement.
- The school supports pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds well. Specialist help such as from the local authority helps to ensure pupils that speak English as an additional language do well.
- The school's efforts to promote equality of opportunity are resulting in better achievement for some groups of pupils. Even so, progress across the year groups and groups still remains too variable.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although teaching has much improved this year overtime it requires improvement.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. For example, work is not always set at the correct level to ensure that all pupils, especially the most able, make

consistently good progress.

- The quality of marking is rapidly improving and much is of good quality. However, it is not always made clear to pupils how they can take the next steps in their learning. As a result, some pupils, notably in Years 4, 5 and 6, are unable to explain precisely enough how they can improve their work in writing or mathematics.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children find activities in class enjoyable and interesting, such as where adults demonstrated to pupils how to make a fruit jelly for an alien in Reception. Children were fully engaged and appreciative of the nice fruity smells. This excited them about writing their instructions on how to make a jelly.
- Pupils are often involved in different tasks and use their own initiative to decide how best to complete their activities. However, at times pupils are over-reliant on help from teachers, and do not actively seek out information for themselves.
- The teaching of reading has improved well. Training provided for all staff has successfully ensured that all teachers and teaching assistants adopt a consistent approach, particularly in teaching of phonics. As a result, pupils' skills build well on what they already know and can do across the school and standards are rising quickly.
- The teaching of writing and mathematics, while improving, is not yet good. In mathematics, some pupils, such as those in Year 5, are given plenty of opportunities to apply their skills to problem solving activities. For example pupils were challenged with working out how best to map-out the coordinates of a number of shapes, including stars and pentagons, onto the large 'grid-systems' that they had chalked onto the floor in the play yard. However, pupils' problem-solving skills are not consistently well-developed across the school. Further revisions are needed to the teaching of writing and mathematics, because pupils are not given enough opportunities to use and apply their skills across the various subjects.
- There are clear expectations as to how pupils should conduct themselves in class. Most pupils fully engage with their learning, work well together in pairs and small groups, and are happy to share their work with their classmates.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together. Year 3 pupils for example, were encouraged to direct a series of questions to their classmates who, in the characters of a fox, magpie and dog from their recent story, promptly answered them. Adult support and guidance was skilfully offered where and when it was most needed and ensured that pupils made good progress through the task.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy school, as evidenced by their attendance which, as a result of the work of leaders and in particular the family partnership worker, has rapidly improved. Attendance is now above average and higher than it has been for several years.
- Pupils are proud to wear their school uniform. They are polite and co-operative and very welcoming to visitors.
- Pupils like learning and playing with their friends. They regularly participate in the school's after-school clubs and say that they enjoy the quietness of the 'Peaceful Club' and Nurture Clubs at lunchtimes.
- Pupils are of the opinion that behaviour is good most of the time, as are staff and parents. Pupils know that a few of their classmates sometimes find it difficult to comply with the school's high expectations of the standards of behaviour, but are patient and understanding and treat each other respectfully.
- Sensible attitudes are displayed while moving around the school, during breaks and at lunchtimes. Lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Teachers and all adults are well trained to identify any situations where behaviour might be less than good, and prevent it.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are unanimous in their view that bullying is rare. They say that they feel safe to share any worries that they have with any

adult at any time of the day, and that they are confident that they will always be taken seriously.

- Pupils know that all forms of bullying are wrong, and know, for example, that no one should be treated differently because of the colour of their skin, where they live or 'because they are from poor countries'. They are certain that no such discrimination happens in school but say that if it did, perpetrators would 'get the red card'.
- All pupils know what cyber-bullying is. Older pupils are especially knowledgeable and know that people can get bullied 'on-line', on their phones, and when they are using hand-held games. They say that visitors who recently spoke to pupils in Year 5 and 6 warned them never to share private information with strangers on the internet.
- Pupils regularly discuss issues of trust, safety and behaviour during assemblies and 'circle time'. They say that visitors from the police and fire services help them to stay safe during Bonfire Night, and 'mischief' night at Halloween.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides good leadership to the school, and is determined to improve standards. She works exceptionally well with the deputy headteacher and has the full backing of a well motivated and highly supportive staff.
- With governors' approval, the headteacher has taken decisive action to eradicate any teaching that was not good enough, and to appoint an assistant headteacher to further strengthen the senior leadership team.
- Middle managers and subject leaders are effective in their roles. They are actively involved in improving the quality of teaching through for example, observing lessons and assessing the quality of marking. They are well trained and share the good practice they observe in other schools with their colleagues.
- Effective systems are in place for checking the performance of staff, all of whom are set targets which are directly related to raising levels of attainment. Senior leaders and governors ensure that no member of staff is put forward for promotion or awarded a pay increase unless they are helping the school to improve. Leaders know that they are yet to ensure that teaching is consistently good so that pupils between Years 1 and 6 make consistently good progress in writing and in mathematics.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate. It identifies what the school does well, and what needs to be done in order for it to continually improve.
- The curriculum engages pupils well through its regular visits to places of interest, including museums and discovery centres. Pupils enjoy participating in a wide range of after-school activities ranging from knitting and choir to the 'Let's Get Cooking' club. Pupils' writing and mathematical skills however do not develop at a consistently good rate because opportunities to use and apply these skills across the various subjects of study are sometimes overlooked.
- The school promotes pupils spiritual, and moral, development well by providing them with many opportunities to reflect on their values and beliefs through assemblies and masses. Pupils' social and cultural development is promoted well through, for example, the opportunities they have to play string instruments.
- Pupils have a good understanding of cultural diversity through the school's work with the local authority on challenging racism and through its links with an Argentinean school.
- The school has a good relationship with parents. The overwhelming majority say that they are kept well informed about their child's progress. They are of the opinion that all aspects of the school have improved greatly this year.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good and meet current requirements.
- The local authority and the school's improvement advisor have played an active role in helping the school to improve. Their work has been especially effective in helping to improve the quality of phonics teaching and in strengthening the role of middle leaders.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have authorised a number of key appointments, all of which have had a beneficial effect on the school. The appointment of a family Pastoral worker has rapidly improved pupils' attendance. Governors are well informed by leaders. They have a good understanding of how well pupils are doing because they receive regular reports from, for example, pupil progress meetings.
- Governors are fully aware that the quality of teaching is improving. They know how weaknesses are being challenged, and how teachers' good performance is rewarded.
- Governors know that the primary school sport fund is helping teachers to deliver high quality physical education sessions and that the wide variety of clubs it funds are effectively promoting pupils' health and well-being. Governors know that pupil premium funding is well spent, and that it is helping to improve the achievement of eligible pupils.

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

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| Unique reference number | 105088 |
| Local authority | Wirral |
| Inspection number | 443864 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| 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 | 200 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Val Sims |
| Headteacher | Rachel Crisp |
| Date of previous school inspection | 5 July 2010 |
| Telephone number | 0151 645 3682 |
| Fax number | 0151 645 0137 |
| Email address | schooloffice@stannes.wirral.sch.uk |

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