

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Henshall Avenue, Latchford, Warrington, Cheshire, WA4 1PY

Inspection dates 30 April–1 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- The headteacher and senior leaders have not addressed the key issues from the previous inspection effectively enough. Consequently, the school's effectiveness has declined and is now inadequate.
- The effect of actions taken to improve teaching and learning has been too slow. As a result, pupils' progress across Years 1 to 6 is inadequate, particularly in mathematics and in writing.
- Leaders do not check accurately or often enough whether their actions are making a difference to the achievement of all pupils.
- Governors do not hold the school to account for weak teaching and pupils' poor progress, including those supported by the pupil premium.
- The targets set for teachers to improve their performance are not always met, particularly in mathematics and writing for Years 1 to 6.
- Pupils' reading skills require improvement across Years 1 and 2 because the teaching of linking sounds and letters is variable.
- Pupils' mathematical and writing skills are not being developed well enough in the different subjects they are taught.
- Not enough pupils spell words correctly, write legibly or with enough accuracy.
- Teaching is inadequate. Expectations of pupils, including the presentation and completion of work, are too low. The most able pupils are not stretched sufficiently and the quality of support from teaching assistants is too variable.
- Pupils are not given enough time to check and improve their work in response to the written guidance given by teachers in their books.
- Behaviour requires improvement because, in lessons, pupils' attitudes to learning are not always good, for example, not all pupils respond to teachers' requests to complete work.

The school has the following strengths

- Efforts to improve attendance are effective. More pupils are attending school regularly.
- Arrangements to keep pupils safe are good. Pupils feel safe and secure in school.
- Most pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well in their reading.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve well and are prepared well for Year 1.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a range of lessons across all classes.
- Inspectors took account of 11 responses to the on-line questionnaire Parent View. They also talked to parents on the school grounds.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils and inspectors spoke informally to pupils at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and pupils' books were closely checked.
- Inspectors also held discussions with governors, a representative of the local authority and school staff.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, documents relating to the school's plans for improvement, its procedures for checking the quality of teaching, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Clarice Nelson-Rowe, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sandy Dixie

Additional 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.

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, in order that pupils across the school make good progress, particularly in mathematics and in writing, by ensuring that:
 - time is regularly given for pupils to check, correct or rewrite their work in response to the guidance given to them through the marking they receive
 - teachers check more frequently on the progress of pupils so work can be adapted more quickly, particularly for the most able, to better meet their learning needs
 - teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation and completion of work are raised
 - support from teaching assistants is always of good quality and is well matched to the individual pupils' needs
 - pupils are given more opportunities to practise and apply their mathematical and writing skills in different subjects, in Years 1 to 6
 - pupils in Years 1 and 2 are secure in their learning and understanding of sounds and letters
 - across Years 1 to 6, pupils consistently spell words correctly, present work neatly, legibly and with accuracy
 - pupils are consistently interested in their work so that their attitudes to learning are always good and they readily respond to teachers' requests to complete their work.
- Urgently increase the impact of leadership at all levels, including governance, by ensuring that:
 - accurate data is used and clearly summarised, to frequently measure the speed and effect of actions taken to improve teaching and pupils' achievement
 - prompt action is taken to enable teachers to meet their individual targets to improve their performance more quickly, particularly in the teaching of mathematics but also in writing
 - senior leaders decisively and more quickly, tackle weaknesses in subject leadership, particularly in mathematics.

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.

Ofsted will make recommendations on governance to the authority responsible for the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Between Years 1 and 6, pupils' achievement is inadequate in mathematics and in writing. This is because of weak teaching and weak leadership over time. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach overall standards that are well below those nationally in English and mathematics. Standards have remained low overall since the previous inspection and show too little sign of improving quickly.
- Children join the part-time Nursery class, at different points of the year. The majority start with skills and abilities below, and for some, well below, those typically expected for their age. Most make good progress from their different starting points. By the end of the Reception Year, they are well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- In 2013, pupils' overall attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 declined to below that typically expected, particularly in mathematics. This represents inadequate progress from the start of Year 1.
- Work in pupils' books and school records show that the progress pupils make from their starting points across Years 1 to 6 is weak in mathematics. Inadequate teaching and leadership have led to underachievement in mathematics. Too many pupils lack accuracy in their work. Not enough opportunities are given to pupils to practise their mathematical skills in the different subjects they are taught.
- School records indicate that progress in writing is also now declining. Work in pupils' books and school records show that pupils' skills in writing are too variable across the school. Too many pupils are spelling incorrectly. Work is not consistently well presented and too often illegible. As a result, pupils underachieve in writing.
- Pupils enjoy reading. There are good links with the local librarian who visits the school and books are well matched to pupils' needs, abilities and interest. Pupils have regular opportunities to read with adults. These actions help to promote good achievement in reading, particularly for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- The 2013 results of the check to show how well pupils are learning the sounds that letters make (phonics) at the end of Year 1, fell steeply from the previous year. Although inspection evidence shows that skills in phonics are improving again, some variability in the teaching of phonics remains. As a result, current progress in reading in Years 1 and 2 is not as strong as it is for older pupils in the school.
- While the school is committed to eliminating discrimination, different groups of pupils do not achieve well enough. The most able pupils, in particular, are not challenged sufficiently and so they underachieve.
- In some lessons, teaching assistants provide some good support for the least able pupils as well as disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. However, the quality of support is too variable and so these pupils underachieve.
- In Year 6 in 2013, the attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium, including pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, was over a term below those of others in the school in mathematics and reading and over two terms below in writing. Inspection evidence shows that similar gaps currently remain. Key leaders and managers, including governors, do not check closely enough to see whether the pupil premium funding is used to good effect. To this end, the school is not effective in its promotion of equality of opportunity.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Too much teaching requires improvement or is inadequate. This results in pupils making slow progress between Years 1 and 6. In these year groups, expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Teachers do not promote and encourage pupils' pride in their work.
- The teaching of mathematics and writing is inadequate. Pupils are not given enough

opportunities to practise mathematical and writing skills when completing work in different subjects. Teaching fails to ensure that pupils spell words correctly, present their work neatly, legibly or with enough accuracy. This particularly hampers their achievement in writing.

- Between Years 1 and 6, pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in their work. Questioning and activities are not adapted enough to enable them to learn more quickly and at higher levels. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils.
- Pupils have gaps in their learning that are not dealt with thoroughly or quickly enough. For example, pupils are not given sufficient time to respond to guidance given in marking to practise skills, or to correct work.
- The least able pupils, as well as disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are not given a consistent quality of support in lessons by teaching assistants. For example, sometimes they can be given too much help and direction and are not encouraged to think enough for themselves.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Teaching ensures that children build up a range of skills that prepares them well for learning in Year 1. However, such good teaching is not typical enough across the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are not always good in lessons. Pupils say they get on well with their classmates, but they also say that the behaviour of some could be better.
- In parts of those lessons which do not interest them, the attitudes of some pupils deteriorate. They become restless and lose attention. Some pupils fail to complete work as requested by teachers and present work poorly.
- The number of exclusions has significantly reduced. There have been no exclusions since the last inspection. The school's records of pupils' behaviour show a reduction in poor behaviour over time. Pupils say that behaviour in the playground has particularly improved well, due to the headteacher discouraging physical contact between pupils during playtimes.
- Around the school, pupils are generally well mannered. They show respect for the school environment. Pupils give thoughtful responses when given the chance to reflect on spiritual or moral issues during assemblies and they show a genuine interest in the views of others.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils feel safe because they trust the staff and get on well with them. Parents who responded to Parent View and who were spoken with during the inspection, all agreed that their children feel safe in school.
- Pupils feel physically safe due to the good security measures around the school. Pupils have good understanding of safety issues, including internet safety and bullying. They report that there is hardly any bullying and that racist or homophobic behaviour is rare.
- Attendance is improving well so that it is now average. Punctuality is good. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has dropped significantly, as a result of the school's efforts.

The leadership and management

are inadequate

- Leaders have failed to prevent the school's decline since the last inspection. The key issues from the last inspection, such as to improve teaching and achievement, have not been tackled effectively enough.
- Despite some actions taken to improve teaching, senior and middle leaders have failed to eradicate inadequate teaching and too much teaching still requires improvement. As a result, pupils' achievement has declined significantly and is now inadequate and shows too little sign of improving, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- The leadership of teaching is weak. Individual teachers are not sufficiently challenged by senior

leaders to meet their performance targets to improve the quality of teaching. As a result, improvements are not secure or quick enough to sufficiently raise pupils' poor progress and low levels of attainment, particularly in mathematics but also in writing.

- The plans drawn up by senior and middle leaders to improve the school include the appropriate actions needed to be taken. However, there is a lack of clarity about the speed and intended effect of such actions taken. This is because the information leaders collect showing pupils' achievement is not always accurate, or clearly summarised. The information is not used often enough by leaders to check on whether actions are improving the quality of teaching and leading to improvements in achievement for all groups of pupils, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- Senior leaders have not tackled weaknesses in subject leadership, particularly in mathematics, decisively or quickly enough and this continues to hamper the school's ability to improve at a good enough rate.
- Assemblies, lessons and visitors help to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills are not promoted well enough to ensure pupils reach higher levels of achievement. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise their mathematical and writing skills in different subjects in Years 1 to 6.
- Pupils benefit from the new primary school sport funding which has resulted in pupils improving their physical skills in a wider range of activities, including dance and athletics. More pupils participate in sporting activities which help them to keep fit and healthy.
- The majority of parents who responded to Parent View and who were spoken with during the inspection indicated that they are satisfied with the school's work.
- The local authority is aware of the school's weaknesses. It has offered a range of support, including training for governors. However, the support has not yet made the impact needed to ensure rapid improvements in the quality and leadership of teaching, in pupils' achievement and in the quality of leadership overall.
- The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Overall, the governing body has not held the school to account well enough. They acknowledge that they have been too slow to address the school's weaknesses. This is because their knowledge about the school's performance, their skills in checking on the school and their organisation have only very recently improved. Governors are well aware of the school's arrangements to manage the performance of staff and that any future pay awards need to reflect pupils' improved achievement. However, they have not been quick enough in challenging the impact of such arrangements on improving teaching and achievement. Governors are now developing stronger links with school staff, such as linking more closely with subject leaders. While governors are aware of how the primary school sports funding is spent and the impact it is having, this is not the case for the pupil premium.
 - The governing body ensures that safeguarding procedures meet the 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	111309
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	442409

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	156
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Morgan
Headteacher	Andrea Towey
Date of previous school inspection	15 January 2013
Telephone number	01925 633317
Fax number	Not Applicable
Email address	staugustines_primary_head@warrington.gov.uk

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