

# St Bede's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Ridge Terrace, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6EQ

**Inspection dates** 17–18 June 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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.

- Standards at the end of Year 6 are below average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Reading material is not varied or challenging enough. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their writing and numeracy skills in other subjects or real-life situations.
- The significant turnover in teaching staff has had an adverse effect on pupils' progress in some classes, particularly the current Year 6.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement. Work is not always at an appropriately challenging level for the most and least able pupils.
- Pupils are not given precise enough feedback or the opportunity to return to their work in order to improve.
- Behaviour requires improvement. Pupils are not always listened to and would like opportunities to be more involved. There is some inattentive behaviour.
- Safety requires improvement. Younger pupils have insufficient knowledge of different types of bullying and feel intimidated by some rough play at lunchtimes.
- Leadership and management require improvement. Many parents disagree that the school is well led and managed. They have not been kept well informed about staff changes.
- Middle leadership requires improvement in order to help make sure that subjects are taught well.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because the quality of teaching has improved and is now good.
- Standards have risen in Key Stage 1 so that attainment is now average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 4 and 5.
- Senior leaders and governors have a clear and ambitious plan for the future. Their actions are now leading to improving teaching and achievement.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 10 lessons taught by 10 teachers, as well as making several shorter visits to classrooms and checking pupils' work. Some of these activities were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors talked with pupils at break and lunch times, and heard others in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- The views of 37 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and two letters received during the inspection were taken into account. Inspectors also talked with parents informally at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, teachers, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The school's improvement plan and records of pupils' achievement, records of the quality of teaching, pupils' behaviour and safeguarding were examined.
- Seventeen staff submitted their views via a questionnaire and inspectors took these into account.

## Inspection team

Christine Cottam, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Nicola Nelson-Taylor

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Bede's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary is an average-sized primary school.
- The school is in a formal federation with St Benet Biscop Roman Catholic High School and shares one governing body. The headteacher of the high school is the executive headteacher of St Bede's. The deputy headteacher of St Bede's is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is 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 vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is similar to that usually found.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school has received support from a Gateshead teaching school, Lobley Hill Primary School.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good by:
  - giving pupils precise feedback that helps them know exactly how to make better progress, and providing time for them to edit, improve or correct their work
  - setting more challenging work for the most able
  - planning work for the least able pupils that is at an appropriately challenging level
  - making sure all pupils are concentrating when they need to.
- Accelerating the rates of progress throughout the school in reading, writing and mathematics so that attainment by the end of Year 6 improves and is above average by:
  - providing a wider range of reading material to encourage and inspire pupils to read more challenging texts
  - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length in order to practise their handwriting, spelling, grammar and punctuation skills in English and in other subjects
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to learn to apply their numeracy skills to solving problems in order to better develop their understanding.
- Strengthen leadership and management by developing the skills of middle leaders and improving communication with pupils and parents so that:
  - the special educational needs coordinator carefully checks the effectiveness of provision for pupils
  - middle leaders are able to take full responsibility for pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching in their areas
  - pupils feel they are listened to and have opportunities to take more responsibility for

themselves and others

- parents know who to contact should they need to and are kept better informed about their own child's progress and plans for the future leadership of the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils are not making consistently good progress, because the quality of teaching requires improvement.
- Children enter the Nursery class with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. There has been a recent and significant improvement in the quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage, so that children are now reaching a good level of development for their age by the time they enter Year 1.
- Standards have been rising in Key Stage 1 for three years so that pupils' attainment is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Attainment is below average in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 6. While the vast majority of pupils are making the progress expected from their starting points, too few are doing better than this. An excessive number of teachers have left or joined the school since the last inspection, so that teaching over time has not been good enough. Pupils in Year 6 have suffered the most disruption to their learning and achievement over time.
- Pupils are making good progress in other year groups in Key Stage 2 so that attainment is at least in line with that expected for their age.
- Pupils enjoy reading. Younger pupils make good progress in learning letters and sounds so that more pupils are now reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check. There is not a wide enough variety of reading material for pupils to choose from, for example, younger pupils are reading books that are too easy for them.
- Pupils' progress in writing requires improvement because they are not expected to write at length nor are given enough help to improve their work. They do not have many opportunities to practise their grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting skills in other subjects, such as science and topic work.
- The majority of pupils make the progress expected of them in mathematics, although too few do better than this. Methods of calculation are often taught well, but pupils are not taught how to apply their skills to solve problems and develop their understanding. Where pupils have made mistakes, they are not always given the chance to return to their work to correct it. This is particularly the case where there have been frequent changes of teachers.
- The most able pupils are not making as much progress as they could. While the proportion reaching above-average levels at the end of Year 2 is increasing, this is not the case at the end of Year 6.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates because they receive good support from teaching assistants.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium make similar progress to other pupils. This group includes those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. In the 2013 Year 6 national tests, there was a gap in attainment between those eligible for free school meals and those who are not; those eligible for support were about one term behind other pupils in mathematics, one year behind in reading and five terms behind in writing. Leaders and governors are now tracking the attainment and progress of eligible pupils much more closely and these gaps are narrowing considerably.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching over time requires improvement. It has not been helped by a high turnover of staff. The situation is now much more settled and teaching is improving, so that some is now good.
- Teachers usually mark pupils' work regularly and tell them what it is they need to improve. This feedback is often not specific enough to help pupils know how they can do better. For example, 'watch your handwriting' does not help pupils to improve the quality of their handwriting and this is compounded by the lack of opportunity for pupils to practise their handwriting in order to

make better progress.

- While pupils are taught the mechanics of calculation well in mathematics, there are not enough opportunities for them to apply their skills in order to solve problems. When pupils make mistakes they are not always helped to improve, with examples of pupils moving on to new work without eliminating and correcting those mistakes.
- The work set for the most able pupils is not always challenging enough for them, particularly when they are expected to complete easier work before being moved on to harder tasks. Pupils are not encouraged regularly enough to 'have a go' at more challenging activities that make them think for themselves and that might have more than one possible answer.
- Sometimes the work set is too easy for the least able pupils or it is too difficult so that they do not always complete their work.
- Where pupils learn most, teachers plan carefully so that pupils know exactly what they are going to learn and are motivated to complete their work in the time set. In contrast, in some instances, pupils do not listen carefully enough to the teacher and when this inattentive behaviour goes unchecked, it prevents pupils from making sufficient progress.
- Teachers ask pertinent questions so that they find out what pupils already know and understand in order to build on this learning and help them make progress.
- The teaching of letters and sounds has improved since the last inspection and is now good. This is because teachers know the stage each group is at and plan activities that ensure pupils make good progress.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. There is a rich variety of learning activities that interest children so that they are eager to learn. As a result children make good progress in their physical abilities and in their language and social skills.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils

### requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils are polite, confident and generally well behaved, particularly in the classroom. The vast majority have good attitudes to their work and disruption to learning is rare.
- Pupils are caring and particularly proud of their charity work. However, they say that they could be more involved in school life and do not understand why they no longer have a school council.
- There are some opportunities for pupils to take greater responsibility, for example, Year 5 pupils enjoy taking children from the Reception class to mass. These opportunities are not widespread.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy a rich variety of different activities that are helping them to develop good physical and social skills. Children behave appropriately in a range of situations, for example, taking care not to hurt others when riding their bicycles and sitting quietly when in the reading area.
- Pupils say they want behaviour at playtimes and lunchtimes to improve and they would like more to do. Pupils say they used to be allowed to get equipment out but have not been able to do so for some time. There is a 'climbing area' with adventurous equipment in the school grounds but pupils are not allowed to use it unless an adult says they can and it was not used during the inspection despite good dry weather.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. Overall, pupils feel safe at school and older pupils have a good knowledge of how to stay safe, for example, on the internet. Younger pupils have a less secure knowledge of different types of bullying and have some concerns when other pupils become angry with each other on the playground. Older pupils say there is not much bullying and any that occurs is dealt with appropriately, especially by teachers. Pupils say they have less confidence in the lunchtime supervisors, who, they feel, do not always listen to them.
- Attendance has improved and is now much closer to the national average. In particular, the number of pupils who are persistently absent has decreased considerably.

**The leadership and management** requires improvement

- The executive headteacher and governors are unrelenting in their commitment to making sure the school improves. They are ambitious and determined and provide good leadership at this level. As a result achievement, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, has improved.
- Senior leaders have had to tackle significant staffing difficulties with a high turnover of teachers. These issues have now been dealt with and the quality of teaching is beginning to improve.
- This legacy of inconsistent teaching has had a negative impact on achievement in Year 6. Good assessment information from a rigorous tracking system is helping to make sure that pupils in other year groups are now making more rapid progress.
- Less than half of parents who responded to 'Parent View' agree the school is well led. This is because parents are unsure of who to contact and because senior leaders have not communicated their plans well enough with them. Governors agree that communication needs to improve and have plans in place to recruit a substantive headteacher.
- Senior leaders regularly check the quality of teaching by visiting lessons and checking the work in pupils' books. They give teachers good feedback on how they can improve and provide opportunities for them to learn how to improve their teaching.
- Leaders have enlisted particularly effective support from a teaching school and this has improved the quality of phonics teaching and the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, so that both are now good. This demonstrates the school's capacity to continue to improve.
- The high turnover of teachers has meant that middle leaders have only recently been appointed and are not yet trained or effective in their roles.
- A new special educational needs coordinator has also just been appointed. There are as yet no effective systems for checking that identified pupils' needs are fully met.
- Pupils have good opportunities to develop their spiritual and cultural understanding through a broad and varied curriculum. They have a good knowledge of the cultures in other countries, such as India and China. However, the curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
- The primary school sport funding has been used effectively to extend the range of sports available and provide more competitive opportunities through a local sports partnership. Pupils highlighted their physical education lessons with visiting secondary teachers as a very positive aspect of the curriculum.
- The school is a caring, safe environment where safeguarding practices meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority provides support through a school improvement professional who visits the school regularly and reports directly to the governing body.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - There is one governing body for both the primary and high school. Governors bring a wealth of experience and expertise from a wide variety of backgrounds. At the point of federation, great care was taken to ensure the skills of governors from the shadow governing body of the primary school were not lost. As a result governance of the primary school is strong.
  - Governors have an excellent knowledge of pupils' achievement data because they have received training. They are extremely challenging in their approach to this information and set targets for the headteacher that are helping to drive improvements.
  - They have a low tolerance of performance that is less than good and a detailed knowledge of the quality of teaching. There have been examples of pay awards being withheld because targets have not been met.
  - Governors ensure funding, such as the pupil premium, is used effectively so that any gaps in attainment between different groups of pupils are closed.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	122308
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	430595

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	239
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anne Hardy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Con Todd
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 June 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01670 822389
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