

# St Swithun's Catholic Primary School

Taswell Road, Southsea, PO5 2RG

**Inspection dates** 25–26 June 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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		Good	2
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 is not consistently good enough. Therefore, their attainment in writing and mathematics is not as high as it could be.
- Too few of the most able pupils achieve the high results in writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 of which they are capable.
- There is not enough good teaching in the school. Teachers do not consistently give pupils enough challenge to enable them to do well.
- Not all teachers know their subjects well enough to be able to plan pupils' learning effectively.
- School leaders and governors have not ensured that enough teaching has been good over time. As a result, pupils' progress and results have declined until very recently.
- Not all subject leaders have a good enough understanding of the strengths and areas for development in their subjects. This limits their effectiveness in bringing about school improvements.

### The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed executive headteacher has halted the decline in school standards and raised expectations in the school. Teaching and achievement are beginning to improve as a result.
- Pupils' progress and results in reading are better than those found in most other schools.
- Pupils are eager and willing to learn. They behave well towards adults and each other and are courteous and caring. They feel safe and well looked after in school.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are very reflective about their beliefs and values. They understand the difference between right and wrong, and consider the consequences of their actions on others.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors saw teaching in all classes. The inspectors observed 15 lessons and pupils' behaviour in the playground and at lunchtime. Two lessons were observed jointly with the executive headteacher.
- Discussions were held with pupils, four members of the governing body, the executive headteacher, school leader and other members of staff.
- The inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work, including support for pupils who need extra help. They heard pupils read and examined pupils' work in their books and on classroom and corridor wall displays.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents, including plans for what pupils will learn in each subject, plans for the school's future development and the school's use of the additional government funding.
- They also examined the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe, pupils' attendance records, minutes of governing body meetings, records of how pupils' learning is checked and tracked, and records of how the quality of teaching is checked.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents by considering 30 responses to the online Parent View survey and four letters that were received, and through discussions with several parents.
- Inspectors took staff views into consideration by looking at questionnaires completed by 31 staff members and through discussions with several members of staff.

## Inspection team

Steven Popper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jeanne Simpson

Additional Inspector

Jacqueline Good

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is lower than that found in most schools. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is higher than average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus and those with statements of special educational needs is also higher than in most other schools. Some pupils have speech, language and communication needs, whilst others have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The executive headteacher took up her post in January 2014. The English leader took up his post in September 2013.

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

- Ensure that all teaching is good or better by making certain that all teachers give pupils, particularly the most able, a high level of challenge.
- Ensure that pupils' achievement is good by making certain that all teachers know their subjects well enough to be able to plan pupils' learning effectively.
- Ensure that all subject leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in their subjects, and use this understanding to promote school improvements.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils' progress and results in writing and mathematics are not consistently good enough. Pupils' achievement overall has declined until very recently. The amount of progress that pupils make still varies across the school. There are too many circumstances where pupils' progress is too slow. This is because too much teaching is still not good enough.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills typical for their age. They make good progress and are well prepared for learning in the rest of the school.
- Pupils' results in writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 are lower than average. Pupils' results at the end of Key Stage 2 are much too low in writing, and sometimes too low in mathematics. However, pupils currently in the school are on track to achieve better results in writing this year. This is because teaching is improving.
- Pupils' results in reading in both key stages are higher than in most other schools.
- Too few of the most able pupils achieve the highest results in writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. This is because the work they are given is often not challenging enough.
- The gap between pupils eligible for additional funding and other pupils is being narrowed successfully by the school. This year the gap in attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has closed in mathematics and reading, and is less than half a term in writing. This is a narrower gap than in previous years.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress in line with other pupils in the school. Pupils supported by statements of special educational needs make particularly good progress from their starting points. This is because of the effective individual support that they are given.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement as it does not ensure that pupils' progress and results in writing and mathematics are consistently good enough.
- Not all teachers know their subjects well enough to be able to plan pupils' learning effectively. As a result there is not enough good teaching in the school. Sometimes pupils' mistakes are not recognised by their teachers. There are times when pupils are given activities to do without there being a clear enough idea of what they will learn as a result.
- Teachers do not consistently give pupils, particularly the most able, enough challenge. Some teachers go over familiar ground with pupils when it is more appropriate to stretch them further or advise them of how to improve their work. As a consequence, pupils, including the most able, do not always achieve well in writing and mathematics.
- However, school evidence shows that teaching is beginning to improve as a result of the executive headteacher's high expectations. Teachers are clearer about the standard of teaching that is required to ensure pupils' better progress than before the executive headteacher took up her post. Some teachers now demonstrate good knowledge of their subjects and challenge their pupils well, although too few at present. Similarly, some teachers plan pupils' learning systematically and effectively; but, again, too few at present.
- Teachers have good working relationships with their pupils. They ensure that pupils are ready to learn.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is effective and well planned. Children and pupils supported in these areas of the school learn well and make good progress as a result.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively to support individuals and groups of pupils. Their clear explanations and guidance contribute to pupils' understanding.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are eager and willing to learn. However, although pupils' positive attitudes to learning contribute to the progress pupils make, this has not yet helped to ensure that they make enough progress in all subjects. Pupils are not always careful about the presentation of their work. These are the reasons why behaviour is not outstanding.
- Pupils only lose interest when faced with ineffective teaching. However, they continue to behave well in these circumstances, and low level disruption is uncommon.
- Pupils are courteous and caring towards one another. They behave well in the playground and during lunchtime, and travel around the school safely and with good manners. Pupils are reflective about the consequences of their actions on others.
- The school manages pupils' behaviour well. School records show very few incidents of poor behaviour over time. A very small minority of parents expressed concerns about poor behaviour or bullying in the school, but inspectors found no evidence to support their concerns.
- Pupils understand different types of bullying, including cyber bullying, and are helped to avoid it. One pupil who talked to inspectors said, 'There is a difference between bullying and just teasing.' Another pupil said, 'There is no bullying in the school.'
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are taught how to keep safe in different situations, including when online. Staff and governors have had appropriate safeguarding training.
- Pupils who talked to the inspectors said they felt safe and well looked after in the school and that staff looked after them well. One pupil stated, 'They really care about us and make sure that we are safe.'
- Attendance has remained above national figures over time, and has continued to improve. This is because pupils enjoy coming to school and feel cared for, and because of the school's effective work with parents. Pupils recognise the importance of good attendance.
- A very large majority of parents who left an opinion thought that their children were safe, happy and well looked after in the school, and that the school managed behaviour well.

**The leadership and management requires improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement because school leaders and governors over time have not ensured that all pupils achieve well enough, particularly in writing and mathematics. Also they have not enabled teaching to be securely good or better to raise achievement.
- The executive headteacher has acted strongly and swiftly to improve the school. She has halted a decline in school standards and raised expectations in the school. The school is improving as a result, but not yet to the extent that is required to ensure that teaching is securely good.
- Prior to the arrival of the executive headteacher, the school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses was highly inaccurate and over generous. It did not recognise where the school urgently needed to improve. The school's current self-evaluation is accurate and reliable. It identifies the school's strengths and weaknesses well.
- The current school development plan demonstrates the executive headteacher's high expectations and ambition for the school. It contains carefully planned actions designed to bring about improvements. The school is clear about how it will evaluate the success of these actions.
- Prior to the arrival of the executive headteacher, the school did not monitor the quality of teaching adequately. This has now changed. The executive headteacher and other senior leaders rigorously check the quality of teaching. Teachers are now properly held to account for their performance and success in improving pupils' progress. Teaching is beginning to improve as a result.
- Not all subject leaders have a good enough understanding of the strengths and areas for

development in their subjects. Similarly, not all subject leaders contribute enough to school improvements. The effectiveness of these middle leaders is inconsistent, with some having much more impact than others.

- The school provides pupils with a broad range of subjects and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, for example through its effective work in music, sports and religious education. The school enables pupils to be very reflective about their beliefs and values and to understand the difference between right and wrong.
- The school works to promote equal opportunities effectively. It guards against discrimination through encouraging pupils to value others and treat everyone well, regardless of background or faith.
- The school works effectively with parents and families and has good relationships with them. This can be seen through the good, and improving, attendance of pupils. However, a very small minority of parents expressed some dissatisfaction with the school's communication with them.
- Additional funding is spent effectively on a range of measures designed to support eligible pupils' learning and progress. As a result, the gap between pupils eligible for additional funding and other pupils is being narrowed successfully and in some cases closed by the school.
- Other additional funding is spent effectively on further enhancing pupils' engagement in competitive sports and increasing teachers' sports skills, particularly in gymnastics and games.
- The local authority knows the school well. It has given the school useful support, and challenged it properly during its period of decline.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have not always been effective enough. They have always supported the school well, but did not challenge it sufficiently whilst it was declining. However, this has changed since the arrival of the executive headteacher. Governors now offer strong challenge to the school. They understand data about pupils' progress and results and question school leaders about how improvements to these, and to the quality of teaching, will be made. Governors now check that teachers who perform well are properly rewarded, and that support is provided if required. They monitor the school's finances, including its use of additional funding, and ensure that these are spent well. Governors now show that they share the executive headteacher's high expectations. They are helping to improve the school.

## 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>	116386
<b>Local authority</b>	Portsmouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	444049

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	314
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jennifer Collighan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catherine Hobbs
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 February 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	02392 829339
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