

St Philip's CofE Controlled Primary School

Church Road, Litherland, Liverpool, Merseyside, L21 8NZ

Inspection dates 24–25 June 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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Pupils have not been making consistently good progress across school, particularly in Key Stage 2. As a result, standards by the end of Year 6 are not as high as they should be, particularly in writing.
- Teachers sometimes plan work that is too easy or too hard, particularly for the most able pupils and this slows their progress.
- Marking does not always help pupils to improve their work and teachers do not always check pupils act on the advice given.
- Sometimes pupils have to wait too long in lessons to be moved on to more demanding work.
- Teaching assistants are not always deployed well enough to support pupils' learning throughout the whole lesson.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to improve their writing skills in other subjects.
- Plans to improve teaching and pupils' achievement do not always make it crystal clear how their impact on pupils will be judged.
- Not all middle leaders are fully involved in checking whether their actions to improve the quality of teaching and the learning and progress of pupils are working well enough.
- Teachers are not yet held fully to account for ensuring pupils make good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and senior leaders are passionate about improving the school and have taken decisive actions to bring about improvements. As a result, the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils are improving and attendance is rising.
- Governors are well focused on improving the school and successfully support and challenge school leaders.
- Good relationships exist with parents. They receive good support from school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are taught well and make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils have very positive relationships with the staff, enjoy learning and behave well. They feel safe and secure in school.
- The school works closely with the local authority and other schools to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 13 parts of lessons. They also listened to pupils read in Years 2 and 6 and discussed with them their views about their favourite authors, books they have read and those they are currently reading.
- The inspectors observed the school's work. They looked at the work in pupils' books and also reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school development plan and records of pupils' attainment and progress. They also reviewed documents related to pupils' attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- The inspectors met with members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body, senior and middle leaders, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors considered the 21 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, the school's most recent survey of parents' views and spoke with several parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspectors took into account the views expressed by staff in the 27 voluntary questionnaires they returned.

Inspection team

Chris Maloney, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kathleen Harris

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most other primary schools.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. A very small minority of pupils are from other ethnic backgrounds and cultural traditions, including a few who are learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding is below average. This additional government funding is provided for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' achievement in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There have been significant changes in staffing since the school's last inspection, including new appointments to the teaching staff and teachers changing classes this year.
- The school is a member of the local 'Strand Network of Schools'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and so raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in writing, so that all pupils achieve consistently well, especially in Key Stage 2, by:
 - making sure all teachers consistently plan work that provides the right level of challenge for pupils of all abilities, particularly the most able
 - ensuring marking always makes it clear to pupils how to improve their work and pupils are given opportunities to show they have understood
 - ensuring the best use is made of teaching assistants throughout the whole lesson in helping pupils make the best possible progress
 - ensuring that pupils are moved on to harder work in lessons as soon as they are ready so that no valuable learning time is wasted
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use and extend their writing skills in a range of subjects.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - ensuring actions planned by leaders to improve the quality of teaching and learning have clear and measurable targets which are checked frequently as to their impact on pupils' achievements
 - ensuring all middle leaders identify precise areas for improvement and have opportunities to check the success of the actions in their impact on pupils' learning and progress
 - ensuring that leaders and governors hold teachers more rigorously to account via their pay progression for pupils making good rather than expected progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- The achievement of pupils requires improvement because over time they have not been reaching the standards of which they are capable by the time they leave Year 6, particularly in writing. Their progress is not consistently good and is too variable between classes and subjects, especially in Key Stage 2.
- Children usually start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below, and for some well below, those typical for their age, especially in their speech and language skills. However, they make good and sometimes outstanding progress from their different starting points and are well prepared for starting in Year 1.
- Standards by the end of Year 2 have been consistently above average overall and in reading, writing and mathematics and sometimes significantly so as in 2011. Following a dip in 2012, attainment rose again in 2013 to be significantly above average overall and in reading. Above average proportions of pupils reached the higher Level 3 in writing and mathematics and particularly in reading. Although current attainment in Year 2 is above average overall, especially in reading, fewer pupils than nationally are working at the higher levels in writing and mathematics.
- Test results at the end of Year 6 in 2013 show that standards have been broadly average over time overall and in reading and mathematics. Although standards in mathematics rose sharply in 2013, standards in writing remained stubbornly below average. Not enough pupils made the progress expected of them in reading and mathematics or made better than expected progress in reading and particularly in writing. Not enough pupils reached the higher Level 5 in writing.
- Checks on school records and on how well current pupils are learning across school show that progress is improving and more pupils are doing increasingly well due to improvements in teaching and the extra challenge given to them. This is resulting in more pupils making good and sometimes outstanding progress and more are reaching the higher levels. However, the school knows that much more needs to be done to address the inconsistent progress evident across classes, particularly in Key Stage 2 and in writing.
- The progress of the most able pupils requires improvement because work is not demanding enough to deepen their thinking or stretch their abilities.
- Pupils say that they really enjoy reading at home and at school. Standards in reading rose sharply in Key Stage 1 because of improved teaching of reading and the good quality support for those who need it. In 2013, the proportion of pupils in Year 1 that reached the expected standard in the screening check of their understanding of the sounds that letters make was below expected nationally, but re-checks in Year 2 show standards are rising as skills are being consolidated.
- Pupils' writing is improving too slowly, reflecting inconsistencies in teaching and the guidance offered to pupils on how to improve their work. Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to practice and extend their writing skills across subjects. The written work of the most able pupils lacks the richness of ideas, vocabulary and accurate use of grammar expected.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and the few pupils who speak English as an additional language are making the same variable rates of progress as others in school. Although overall progress requires improvement, evidence shows this is improving due to pupils' needs being identified early and actions taken quickly to provide the extra help they require.
- In Year 6 in 2013, the gap in the attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, compared to their peers, closed significantly. Attainment was similar to that of the others in their year group in mathematics; two and a half terms behind in reading, and a term behind in writing. Across the year groups currently in school, the gaps in attainment of those supported through the pupil premium group and the other pupils in school are closing rapidly or are non-existent. This reflects the school's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for every pupil.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Although there have been recent improvements, teaching has not been consistently good enough over time, especially in Key Stage 2. This is reflected in observations during the inspection, work in pupils' books and the school's own records of pupils' progress.
- Improvements to teachers' planning reflect a greater focus on providing work for different ability groups. However, learning activities are not always demanding enough, particularly for the most able pupils, to make them think hard or stretch their abilities. Pupils sometimes do mundane tasks or wait too long to be moved on to more challenging work. This slows the progress they make.
- Although there is some good use made of skilled teaching assistants, especially in supporting reading, this is not consistent in all classes. This results in missed opportunities to support and extend pupils' learning and engagement throughout the whole lesson.
- There have been improvements made to the quality of marking and some good examples can be seen in some classes. However, this practice is not yet consistently evident across school and pupils are not always able to show that they can improve their work in line with the guidance provided.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive and supportive. Staff know pupils well as individuals and this helps to build mutual respect, boost self-esteem and support good behaviour.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn well because they are taught well and enjoy a curriculum that engages their interests. Adults are very caring and have high expectations of children's learning and behaviour. They place great importance on developing children's love of learning.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 also learn well because teaching is good. Tasks planned for pupils keep them interested and are generally well matched to their different abilities.
- No learning time is wasted as pupils are given more demanding work just as soon as they are ready. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to ask searching questions and provide opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding. Expectations are high and pupils are highly motivated to do their best.
- In Year 6 pupils were fully engaged in solving challenging and fun mathematics puzzles. There was a buzz of activity as the teacher moved around the class challenging their thinking and stretching the abilities of all pupils. This led to pupils, including the most able, sustaining their interest and concentration and making good progress throughout the lesson.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite and courteous and behave well in lessons and during playtimes. They enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in their average and rising attendance.
- Pupils have strong relationships with staff and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They are respectful to staff and were eager to tell inspectors about their caring staff. A typical pupil comment was, 'Staff are really kind and helpful and are always there for us.'
- Pupils respond well to class routines and work well with others in pairs or groups to share their learning. They play cooperatively and are considerate to each other. Pupils throughout school are welcoming to visitors. Indeed, children in the Reception Year were eager to know if the inspectors were having a nice time in school.
- Occasionally, when learning does not fully meet their needs, a few pupils lose concentration and drift off-task, sometimes disturbing others in class.
- There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to take responsibilities and play their part in improving the school and the ways they can help others. Pupils are keen to be school or eco-councillors who have been active in helping to save energy in school. They really enjoy '20p Tuesday' where funds are raised so that the school can support a child in Ghana and the

information they receive that tells them of the difference they are making.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Even younger pupils know the importance of how to stay safe on the internet. As one pupil said, 'Don't send your name or password to anyone'. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including prejudice-based and cyber-bullying. They say that bullying only happens occasionally but are confident in staff to sort matters out quickly and fairly.
- Pupils with additional learning, language, social, emotional or health needs are fully included in school life and this boosts their self-esteem well.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because over time not enough has been done to secure consistently good achievement and teaching across the school.
- The headteacher's passion and commitment to improving the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils is shared by other senior leaders. Successful improvements have been made to the quality of teaching, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the progress of pupils, especially in reading in Key Stage 1 and mathematics in Key Stage 2. The significant changes in teaching have been managed well and have strengthened the quality of teaching. The attendance of pupils is rising.
- Although the actions planned by leaders at all levels are focused on what needs improving, they are not clear enough in how the success of their impact on the learning and progress of pupils will be measured.
- The headteacher and governors have not shied away from taking tough and decisive actions to address underperformance in teaching. Staff have accessed a good range of training to improve their practice and the progress of pupils. The quality of teaching is checked more closely and guidance and support given to teachers on how to improve. Staff morale is high because they are well supported in a positive environment where they are encouraged to reflect on their work and share ideas. A typical teacher comment was, 'I have been well supported since I came to this school. Everyone is really helpful.'
- Not all middle leaders are clear about the precise areas that need to improve or have enough opportunities to measure the impact of their work on how well pupils are learning.
- The progress of all pupils, including different groups is now being checked more regularly so that actions can be taken to support those in danger of underachieving. This reflects the school's commitment to giving all pupils equal opportunities to learn. However, not all pupils are yet making enough progress, particularly the most able.
- Subjects are linked together creatively and sufficient time is allocated to English and mathematics. Exciting topics for learning are provided such as when Year 6 built an electronic 'Kit Car' with the local high school. Learning linked to class stories provides great interest for pupils, as does the visit of food chefs or the learning of French and Spanish. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use and extend their writing skills in a range of subjects.
- Strong partnership working with the local 'Strand Network of Schools', has enabled leaders to share practice and to visit other schools to observe learning and teaching. The school has also received good quality support from the local authority in managing changes to staff and improvements in teaching and learning.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about the wider community in which they live as well as other cultures and traditions and issues of persecution and justice. Pupils are given many opportunities to help others such as working with UNICEF or supporting a child in Ghana.
- There are strong links with parents and the local community. Good use is made of primary school sports funding to improve the skills of staff and the use of skilled sports coaches to deliver and model teaching of different sports such as judo.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. The Chair of the Governing Body has successfully led improvements in

strengthening the role of governors and the effectiveness of their work. Governors are fully committed to driving the school forward. They visit school regularly and have good links with staff to help them check on how well pupils are learning and the impact of the school's work. They make good use of the detailed information they receive from staff and other governors, especially the chairs of committees to ensure that they know the school's strengths and what needs to improve in teaching and achievement. They use data effectively to compare the progress of different groups of pupils. However, they have not yet ensured that teachers are fully held to account via their pay progression for pupils making at least good progress.

- Governors monitor the school's budget carefully, including the use of sports funding. They are fully informed on how the pupil premium funding is spent and the difference it is making to this group of pupils. Governors make sure that safeguarding meets 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	104898
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	443969

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julia Garner
Headteacher	Marian Hodgson
Date of previous school inspection	15 April 2010
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