

The Cathedral Catholic Primary School, Lancaster

Balmoral Road, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 3BT

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. It is not good because

- Pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics are not high enough, and too few pupils make good progress by the end of Year 6.
- There is not yet enough good-quality teaching to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress over time.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough, and the work set is not always hard enough.
- Staff ask too few questions that challenge pupils to deepen their understanding.
- Pupils are not always given clear enough guidance in marking about what they need to do to improve their work, and there are too few checks that pupils respond to advice when it is given.
- School improvement planning is not focused firmly enough on improving teaching in order to raise achievement.
- Information about pupils' progress is not analysed and used fully to identify where the school needs to improve.
- Leadership roles in the school are not defined clearly enough, and middle leaders are not yet fully accountable for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their subjects.
- Governors have not always held the school to account as effectively as they should have done.
- Changes introduced by school leaders have not yet had sufficient time to have a full impact and ensure that teaching is consistently good and pupils achieve well over time.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are good. They are keen to learn and do well, and feel safe and well cared for in school.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The school works very well with parents, who are extremely supportive of it.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons, taught by seven teachers. One lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with school leaders and with five governors, including the Chair and vice chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met two groups of pupils, and also spoke informally to other pupils in lessons and during break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors looked at the work pupils were doing in lessons and in their books over time. They listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 5 read and talked to them about their enjoyment of reading.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and examined a number of documents concerning pupils' current achievement and progress, development plans and performance management information. They looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements. Minutes of governing body meetings were also considered.
- Inspectors took account of 22 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and 18 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Robert Birdwell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Carol Michel

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in seven classes from the Reception Year to Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is around average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and children looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is around average.
- A large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, especially pupils who speak Polish as a first language, is above average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better, in order to raise pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that expectations of what pupils can achieve are always high enough
 - making sure that pupils are always provided with work that is consistently hard enough to get the best from them
 - ensuring that pupils are asked questions that deepen their understanding more frequently
 - making sure that pupils are always given very clear guidance about how they can improve their work, and that checks are made that pupils respond to this advice.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - improving school self-evaluation and planning so that it is very firmly focused on improving the quality of teaching in order to raise pupils' achievement
 - making sure that leaders at all levels analyse and use information about pupils' progress more effectively so that they have a fuller picture of how well pupils are performing and can make a stronger contribution to school improvement
 - making sure that leadership roles in the school are more clearly defined and that middle leaders are more involved and accountable for making checks and improving the quality of teaching and learning in their areas
 - ensuring that governors become more active in holding the school to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and progress.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
- An external review of the use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress across the school. By the end of Key stage 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are not high enough and too few pupils achieve well.
- At the end of Year 6, pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics have fallen and have been below average for the past two years. In 2013, the proportion of pupils who made the expected progress was around average in writing and mathematics, but below average in reading; the proportion of pupils that made more than expected progress was around average in writing, but below average in reading and mathematics. However, this group was affected by a higher than usual proportion of pupils who joined the school at times other than the usual ones.
- At the end of Year 2, pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been below average for the last two years, especially in writing.
- Pupils are now making better progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 as the quality of teaching is improving. The work in pupils' books and the school's systems for checking how well pupils are doing confirm this. However, standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are likely to remain below average this year, and progress at the end of Year 6 is likely to remain below the expected rate.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium have not achieved as well as other pupils. In 2013, the attainment of pupils in Year 6 known to be eligible for free school meals was around a term ahead of that of other pupils in mathematics, but around a term and a half behind in writing, and over a year behind in reading.
- Children join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and understanding that are generally below those that are typical for their age, especially in language and literacy. They make good progress in the Reception class because they are well taught and have good opportunities to develop their skills. They are well prepared to enter Year 1.
- Pupils make steady progress in reading during Key Stage 1. They read regularly and have a sound knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 national phonics check improved in 2013, although it remains below average.
- Work in pupils' books in Years 2 and 5 shows steady progress in writing and mathematics. Pupils write in different styles, and there is a suitable emphasis on spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils' basic skills in mathematics are secure, and they can apply and use these skills to solve problems.
- The most able pupils generally achieve higher standards and make better progress than their classmates, but too few of them make good progress overall.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language receive well-targeted support, in lessons or in individual or small-group sessions. As a result, they make progress at a rate similar to that of other pupils in the school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has not ensured that pupils make consistently good progress and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. School records and inspection evidence show that the majority of teaching is now good and that progress is accelerating. No inadequate teaching was seen during the inspection, but nor was any outstanding teaching.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough and the work set is not consistently challenging enough to enable pupils to make rapid progress and achieve well.
- Questioning is used effectively to check and reinforce pupils' knowledge, but tends to be used less frequently and less well to challenge pupils to deepen their understanding.
- The quality of marking and assessment is variable. Staff mark pupils' work regularly and use

praise effectively. However, pupils are not always given clear guidance about what they need to do to improve their work and there are too few checks that pupils are responding to this advice when it is given.

- Pupils learn well, and make good progress when expectations are high and the work challenges and engages them in their learning. In a science lesson, for example, Year 4 pupils were investigating how to separate various mixtures of materials. Pupils worked effectively in groups to work out and use different methods. Different groups had different activities, and were moved on to more challenging work when ready. Questioning was used well to challenge and extend pupils' understanding. The pupils enjoyed the lesson, had to think hard about what they were doing and made good progress.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. There is an appropriate balance between activities directed by the staff and those chosen by the children, and a strong emphasis on improving children's language and communication skills. Learning is purposeful and suitable for children's varying levels of development. Good use is made of the very limited outdoor learning environment. As a result, children make good progress.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to support the learning of pupils who need extra help. This includes those who are disabled or have special educational needs, pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who are supported by the pupil premium. They provide effective extra help in the classroom, or in individual or small-group sessions to make sure that pupils understand their work and make progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. They are polite and considerate and there are good relationships between pupils and adults in the school.
- Pupils say that they enjoy lessons and teachers try to make learning fun and interesting. As a result, lessons typically run smoothly and without interruption.
- Inspectors observed good behaviour around the school. Pupils play sensibly and safely on the playground during breaks, and behave well in the hall at lunchtime. Pupils say that behaviour is usually good, but that sometimes some pupils can be a bit silly or fall out, although staff act quickly to sort this out.
- School records show that there are few instances of poor behaviour, including racist or discriminatory incidents. On the rare occasions when pupils misbehave, staff act appropriately and effectively.
- A small number of pupils sometimes display challenging behaviour, but the school manages this consistently and well. These pupils are supported in a caring and nurturing way, often involving the school counsellor.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance has improved and is now around average.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and very well cared for. They know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when using roads, when cycling and when using the internet.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of different types of bullying, but say that it is very rare in school. They are confident that the school would sort it out quickly if it occurred.
- All parents who responded to the Parent View survey believe that their children are happy, safe and well looked after in school, and that pupils behave well. Inspection evidence supports this view.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Achievement and the quality of teaching are not good and have not improved quickly enough.

Action is being taken to improve standards and this work is beginning to have an impact, but it has not yet led to consistently good teaching and good progress over time.

- Senior leaders are aware of the areas where the school needs to improve, but their evaluation of how well the school is performing does not focus clearly enough on pupils' progress and achievement and the quality of teaching. As a result, school improvement planning is not linked strongly enough to improving teaching in order to raise pupils' achievement.
- Systems to check pupils' achievement and progress are in place. However, leaders at all levels do not analyse or use this information as effectively as they might in order to have a full picture of how well pupils are achieving and to plan further improvement.
- Senior leaders do use this information to identify and provide pupils with extra help if they need it. This includes pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs, pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who are eligible for the pupil premium. This shows the school's commitment to equal opportunities for all pupils.
- Senior leaders check the quality of teaching through lesson observations, and looking at teachers' planning and pupils' work. This information is used when making recommendations about teachers' pay, and to identify where further training or support is needed. This can include working with other schools in the local Catholic schools cluster. The school can show examples of where this has led to improved teaching.
- Leadership roles in the school are not defined clearly enough. Middle leaders do not yet have enough involvement; they have too little accountability for making checks and improving the quality of teaching and learning in their areas.
- The curriculum is well planned and engages pupils effectively in their learning. It promotes positive behaviour and is enriched by a range of clubs, activities, trips and visits. Year 6, for example, recently went on a theatre visit to London.
- The school has strong links with the local cathedral and community. These contribute to pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is using the additional primary school sport funding successfully to improve the quality of physical education. Specialist teachers and coaches take lessons, train staff and run activities, and the school participates in a wider range of sports competitions. This has broadened the range of sporting activities in the school and is having a positive impact on pupils' physical well-being.
- The local authority is providing training for governors and increasingly effective support for the school to improve the checking of pupils' achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The role played by governors is improving and they are developing a more complete view of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They have undertaken training to keep themselves abreast of developments, but their understanding of school achievement and performance data is not as detailed as it might be. They are beginning to hold the school to account more effectively by asking more searching questions, but recognise that they need to become more active in this area. They would welcome an external review of governance. They make sure that pupils' performance is considered when making decisions about teachers' pay. They know how the pupil premium funding is spent but are less sure about the impact it is having. Governors ensure that the school's finances are soundly managed and that the governing body meets its statutory duties, including those related to safeguarding.

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	119621
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	439870

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joanna Booth
Headteacher	Anne Goddard
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2010
Telephone number	01524 64686
Fax number	01524 34667
Email address	bursar@cathedral.lancs.sch.uk

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