

# St Alban's Catholic Primary School

Wadworth Street, Denaby Main, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN12 4AQ

**Inspection dates** 23–24 September 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils in all year groups make good progress from their individual starting points. A significant number of pupils make more than the progress expected of them, particularly in the early years.
- Teachers inspire the pupils by planning activities and lessons that excite them. The teaching of writing has improved since the last inspection and this has led to better achievement across the school. Where gaps in learning are identified, pupils are given additional support to catch up.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. They enjoy visiting the school and looking at the work their children have done in their topics.
- Behaviour is good. Adults and pupils get on well together. Respect for one another is modelled very well by staff. Adults follow the church school values throughout everything they do. This is important to school leaders.
- All pupils are very excited about their new curriculum and are keen to share their learning with parents and visitors to the school. They enjoy having the chance to decide what they would like to find out about.
- School leaders and governors know the school well and have high aspirations. Staff and pupils share their ambitions to make the school even more successful.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are not always given work to match their individual learning needs. There are too many times where the work is the same for all the pupils in the class and does not sufficiently challenge the most able.
- Teachers do not always give pupils clear enough guidance about how to improve their work.
- Teachers are not always given enough support by senior leaders to help them understand what they need to do to raise pupils' attainment.

### Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector observed 11 lessons, including three observations undertaken jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also observed break times and listened to pupils read in class.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, school staff, groups of pupils, and the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body, the finance governor and a foundation governor. Meetings were also held with three local authority representatives and the Diocese. A curriculum consultant was spoken to on the telephone.
- To ascertain parents' opinions, the inspector took account of 24 written responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own parent survey documents. Inspection questionnaires completed by 13 members of staff were also taken into consideration.
- A number of school documents were examined. These included information about individual pupils' progress, school improvement plans and records of reports from consultants and the local authority. The work in pupils' books and records relating to the quality of teaching, school self-evaluation, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also scrutinised.

### Inspection team

Karen Foster, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St. Alban's Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is higher than that of other schools nationally. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is lower than that found in most schools.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are therefore eligible for support through the pupil-premium funding is higher than that found in most schools. The pupil premium is additional funding to provide extra support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school has recently agreed for a pre-school provider to use its building on a permanent basis.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

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

- Improve teaching so that the overall quality is outstanding and leads to pupils making outstanding progress, by:
  - making sure that work set for pupils is meeting their learning needs so that pupils, including the most able, are challenged to do the best they can do
  - extending the good practice in some classes in marking and feedback so that all pupils know what they need to do to improve their work
  - supporting the development of all teachers through reviews of their performance, so that they understand what they need to do to raise attainment.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders have correctly identified the areas to improve and their effective actions show that pupils' progress is improving rapidly across the school. They have high ambitions for the school and this is made explicit.
- School self-evaluation is clear and accurate so that leaders know what works well and this is clearly communicated to governors.
- Senior leaders regularly observe the quality of teaching across the school. They know the strengths of the teaching and use these for teachers to support one another through team teaching. During the inspection, the headteacher showed that she knew the teachers well and was able to offer good advice on how to improve further.
- Senior leaders have taken effective and determined action to improve the quality of teaching and are not afraid to have difficult conversations with teachers about their performance. This has supported improvements in the quality of teaching over time. However, this work is as yet incomplete. Policies are in place for reviewing the performance of all teachers but this has happened for only some and not all of them. As a result, some teachers are not as confident as others in knowing what they need to do to raise pupils' attainment.
- Teachers meet with the deputy headteacher regularly to check how well pupils are doing and how they can support further improvements in achievement. Additional support is put into place for staff and pupils where needed and this is reviewed to make sure it works well.
- Leaders have brought in consultant support to completely revise the curriculum. Pupils, staff, parents and governors say this is now exciting. During the inspection, pupils were very keen to show the lead inspector what they were currently working on and talk about previous topics. One boy in Year 6 very proudly showed the inspector an excellent model of the Titanic and talked confidently about what he had been learning.
- The school works well in partnership with other schools, the local authority and the Diocese. Staff have had effective support from all of these partners, who all have an accurate view of the school's performance. Their support has enabled leaders to rapidly improve the progress of pupils. The Diocese has also provided strong support for the well-being of staff, particularly the headteacher.
- The quality of subject leadership, including leadership of subjects, is good. The deputy headteacher has a good knowledge of the achievements of all pupils and uses this to effectively support subject leaders in their roles. As a result, subject leaders know the school well and are able to put plans in place to support improvements throughout the school.
- Leadership of special educational needs is effective in training teaching assistants so that they are able to support pupils' learning needs in the classroom.
- Statutory requirements relating to safeguarding and equality of opportunity are met.
- The new primary school sport funding is used to good effect. Pupils are excited to take part in lessons, compete with other schools and meet accomplished sports people such as the Olympic Bobsleigh champion. The school has used some of the funding to build its own golf course on the school field. The local golf club has given the school advice on this and is working closely with the school to encourage families to take up golf together.
- Leaders ensure health education is taught through the curriculum and pupils have good regard for their own personal safety and well-being.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors know the school well. They can accurately describe the strengths and areas for development in the school.
  - The governing body has changed since the previous inspection. Effective external support has been provided. Governors have conducted skills audits to make sure that they have the skills they need to be able to support and challenge school leaders. The Chair meets with the headteacher each month. These meetings are planned and minutes shared with all governors.
  - Governors know how the pupil-premium funding has been spent and how it has benefited those pupils who are entitled to support from this money.
  - Governors have reviewed the policy for pay and performance which outlines how these are applied to staff in school.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' attitudes in lessons, around the school and at playtimes are good. Pupils are polite and respectful to one another and to adults. They are keen to learn.
- Spirituality is strong throughout the school and this leads to staff and pupils feeling included and part of the school team. Prayer is an important part of school life and is respected by all.
- When questioned, pupils said playtimes were happy and that they all got on well together. Older pupils enjoy helping younger pupils. They cooperate well and enjoy playing games they have made up together.
- Pupils show great respect for adults and one another, even when not directly supervised. They share equipment in lessons very well. In a lesson on computing, they were all keen to use the Sprite program but worked fairly in pairs.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school and their lessons, particularly since the new curriculum started last year. They are excited to talk about their learning. Boys in Year 6 talked about the volcanoes topic with the inspector and were keen to hear what it felt like to live near one and to walk up the side of a volcano.
- Pupils are keen to do well and can talk about how they have improved their work over time.
- Parents say that the behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils say that behaviour is even better since the policies were reviewed last year.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare. They know the school policies and say that often they can sort things out for themselves by letting others know how they feel, for example, explaining they do not want to play. They are also confident that if they speak to adults in school, things will get sorted out.
- Almost all pupils take pride in their appearance, and adults remind them about the importance of looking smart and being ready for learning. The school is well cared for and resources are respected.
- Pupils often lead assemblies and take an active part in Mass. They enjoy taking part in the weekly Gospel assembly. They take their responsibilities seriously.
- The attendance of pupils is similar to that found in most schools nationally. The school has taken effective action to reduce persistent absence. The breakfast club has improved the attendance of 76% of the pupils who regularly attend. Local businesses provide the school with prizes for the 100% weekly attendance raffle.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. There are thorough systems and routines in place to keep pupils safe. Pupils say they feel safe both in school and in the grounds.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- The quality of teaching is good. There have been significant changes to the teaching staff since the previous inspection. Teachers work well together and help one another to improve learning for the pupils. For example, one teacher works alongside others to develop the new computing curriculum, supporting staff with less experience of this area.
- Those parents who expressed an opinion agree that their children are well taught, make good progress and have appropriate homework.
- The quality of teaching of singing in Key Stage 2 is outstanding and the teacher is highly skilled in this area. Pupils understand and demonstrate the importance of needing to warm up and exercise muscles, as they would do for any physical exercise. They are able to sing exceptionally well and cover a wide range of notes. They sing enthusiastically and use these skills as part of their worship in school and in church. They sing to a range of audiences and are proud to represent their school.
- Adults use humour and their exciting curriculum to engage and inspire pupils. The pupils take an active part in lessons. Younger pupils in one mathematics lesson were very surprised when the teacher asked one of them to lie on the desk. There was an audible intake of breath as they waited to see what happened next.
- In some lessons observed, pupils were given reflection time to think about what they had been learning. This worked very well and pupils were able to give clear accounts of what they had been learning the day before.
- Pupils learn well through the new curriculum and enjoy the chance to say what they would like to learn about. This has motivated them. They enjoy using film and listening to visiting adults. Pupils in Year 6 said that the curriculum was 'better than ever'.
- Pupils enjoy reading and can name books and authors they particularly like. Reading skills are good because younger pupils are given lots of well-planned support to learn about the sounds letters make (phonics). Pupils learn reading skills across all subjects. They use this knowledge to read unfamiliar words.

- Spelling is improving; where pupils spell words incorrectly, they are almost always written how they sound.
- Topics are linked across the curriculum to make learning more meaningful. In one lesson, pupils in Year 6 were developing rugby skills. The lesson began with warming up different body parts and a good discussion on why this was needed.
- The quality of writing in pupils' books is good. This has particularly improved with the introduction of the skills lessons. Pupils enjoy the challenge of improving their work and boys in particular say they like to do this as they know the 'Beanstalk' formula. This is adding one improvement each time so that the work builds and grows.
- Each month, a pupil is chosen to be an Ambassador of Learning to motivate the most able pupils. For this, they need to have shown excellence in something. They also must show good behaviour and attitude. These Ambassadors talk to other pupils and try to motivate them too. The school has invited role models in to give the awards.
- Progress of the most able is improving and although end-of-key stage results indicate that they make at least expected progress from their starting points, the school is determined to improve this. Staff have put in place plans for this school year to further challenge these pupils. Nevertheless, work is not always meeting the learning needs of pupils. In some lessons, pupils, particularly the most able, do not have enough to challenge them and this can slow their progress.
- The quality of marking in pupils' books varies. In some, it is good; in a few, it is outstanding. However, there are some classes where marking is not helpful and does not give pupils ways of improving their work.

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress overall and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Across the school, pupils of all abilities make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers and teaching assistants make sure that pupils have regular opportunities to read. They talk to them about their books and ask searching questions about their reading to check for understanding.
- Children start the school in the early years with knowledge and understanding that are below those typical for their age. Communication and language skills are particularly low. Children are well supported in their learning and well-being is given a high priority. This means children settle into school quickly and make good and sometimes outstanding progress. In 2013, children made good progress and left the early years with knowledge and skills typical for their age. In 2014, they made good and sometimes outstanding progress and left with skills just above those expected. The local authority agreed with the judgements made by the school.
- In 2013, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 national phonics check was above average. In 2014, it was well above average.
- Achievement in Key Stage 1 is similar to that expected nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. School data show that pupils are making good progress through the key stage. This is supported by lesson observations and work in books.
- In Key Stage 2 in 2013, pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics was similar to that expected nationally, but boys' achievement was lower than that of girls. School data show these gaps are narrowing. Standards reached by disadvantaged pupils were also lower but these pupils made more progress from Key Stage 1 than other pupils nationally. In 2014, results were slightly higher than in 2013 but there were fewer pupils achieving at higher levels in reading and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, although the small numbers of these pupils make national data comparisons difficult.
- In 2013, disadvantaged pupils were one year behind other pupils in the school in mathematics and one year and one term behind other pupils nationally.
- In reading, these pupils were one year and one term behind other pupils in the school and one year behind all pupils nationally. In writing, they were one term behind other pupils in the school and two terms behind all pupils nationally. School data show that these pupils are now making good progress and closing gaps. In the current Year 1, support is in place for writing and in Year 5, support is in place for mathematics. In all other year groups, these pupils perform in line with other pupils. Their individual needs are met from a variety of means, including breakfast club and individual support.
- School data show that the achievement of pupils is improving and that progress is now good for all groups. This is confirmed by inspection evidence from observing lessons and looking at the work in pupils'

books.

### The early years provision

is good

- Most children, including those with disabilities and special educational needs, make good progress from their starting points; some make outstanding progress, particularly in communication and language.
- The children develop the skills they need for the next stage in their education. Links with Year 1 are strong and children have times where they learn alongside one another.
- The good teaching and strong support from other adults ensure that children have many opportunities to talk about what they are doing. Adults encourage children to express their ideas clearly. They take every opportunity to extend their learning. Two children pretended to ride in a tractor to a football match; the teacher talked to them about it and then encouraged them to design a banner for it. They were delighted.
- The children are excited and motivated by the activities set up for them. A group of children were digging outside in a trough full of soil and were delighted to find real carrots and potatoes in it. One boy took his potato round to various activities and carefully described them all to his potato. He then returned it to the soil for someone else to find.
- Children get on with each other well, and play and learn alongside one another very well. They share equipment fairly and can take turns. There is a good range of resources available to the children and adults encourage the children to use all of them well. Although the outside area is not yet completed, the provision still allows children to run, jump and climb. Adults look after the children very well and encourage children to look after one another.
- Adults all contribute to deciding how well children are doing and this is recorded electronically. The local authority agreed that adults did this accurately.
- Provision for the most able challenges them and adults are continually setting them new challenges. Children respond to this well.
- Children are safe and adults regularly check that the learning environment is kept safe.
- The children settle into school very quickly as it is a nurturing environment. They are taught to work well together and quickly understand what is kind and not kind.
- Leadership of the early years is good. The leader knows the children well and plans work that will support the learning needs of all children. She has very high aspirations for the children and expects them all to make outstanding progress.

## 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>	106771
<b>Local authority</b>	Doncaster
<b>Inspection number</b>	448971

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	148
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gerardine Togher
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jo Ayres
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 February 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01709 862298
<b>Fax number</b>	01709 869457
<b>Email address</b>	admin@st-albans.doncaster.sch.uk

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