

# Our Lady and St Philomena's Catholic Primary School

Sparrow Hall Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L9 6BU

**Inspection dates** 16–17 September 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Early years provision		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Leaders have not tackled weaknesses in teaching effectively since the last inspection. As a result, the quality of teaching has deteriorated and the standards pupils reach have declined; consequently, achievement is inadequate.
- By the end of Year 6, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are low. Weaknesses in the development of these basic skills mean that pupils are not prepared adequately for the next stage in their education.
- Almost all groups of pupils in all key stages underachieve. Pupils' progress varies widely through the school. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is particularly poor.
- Children in the early years underachieve, particularly in writing. They are not ready for learning in Key Stage 1.
- Teachers do not set work which is at the right level of difficulty for the various pupil groups. This reflects teaching which, over time, is too weak.
- Pupils' behaviour is inadequate. Learning is slowed by pupils' lack of attention, poor attitudes to learning and the misbehaviour of a few pupils. Behaviour is not always managed well enough.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe requires improvement. Records of incidents of misbehaviour are not rigorously collated, systematically kept or evaluated to prevent further reoccurrence.
- High levels of extended staff absence, along with several changes in staffing during the last year have significantly hindered the school's improvement.
- The governing body does not hold leaders to account for pupils' progress. Too little is done to ensure that pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, make good progress.

### The school has the following strengths

- New and existing staff and governors share the headteacher's ambitions to increase pupils' progress and raise standards.
- Some aspects of the school's work, such as assemblies, make a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.

### Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 part-lessons taught by 10 different teachers. Of these, three lessons were observed jointly by the lead inspector and the headteacher. In addition, the lead inspector observed the headteacher giving feedback to staff.
- The inspectors met with two groups of pupils, talked to pupils informally at break and lunchtime and listened to a group of Key Stage 1 pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, including the Chair, two representatives from the local authority, senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, to take into account. However, an inspector talked to several parents prior to the start of the school day and also looked at written responses from parents.
- The school’s work was observed and inspectors looked at a number of documents, including safeguarding records, the school’s improvement plan, the school’s data for tracking pupils’ progress, reports on pupils’ achievement and the quality of teaching, teachers’ planning and work in pupils’ books.

### Inspection team

Andrée Coleman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Douglas Scholes

Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.*

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs supported through school action is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above the national average.
- An above average proportion of disadvantaged pupils are eligible for support through pupil premium funding. 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.
- In 2013, the school met 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.
- The school has had three different headteachers in the last two years. The substantive headteacher has been in post since January 2014. There was a great deal of extended staff absence during the last academic year and five teachers left in July 2014. All vacant posts have been filled and two interim deputy headteachers have joined the school on a one-year secondment. A new senior leadership team has been established from September 2014.

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

- Take urgent steps to improve the quality of teaching throughout the school so that it is at least good, in order to raise standards for all groups of pupils in all key stages, so that they can make good or better progress by:
  - ensuring that the basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics are taught consistently well in all classes, including in the early years, with a focus on improving writing in particular
  - raising teachers' expectations regarding the progress pupils should make, especially for disadvantaged pupils
  - using information about what pupils know and can do to set work that is suitably difficult, especially for the most able, and which helps them to learn well
  - ensuring that pupils have the opportunity to respond to teachers' marking and to improve their work themselves
  - planning work which pupils find interesting and challenging so as to improve their concentration and attitudes to learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels including governance by:
  - establishing rigorous systems to measure the performance of staff and the impact they have on raising standards for pupils and ensure that governors hold leaders to account for doing so
  - ensuring that planned improvement is rapid and keeps to tight timescales
  - setting up procedures to check that assessments of pupils' skills and knowledge are accurate
  - ensuring rigorous and specific targets are set for individual pupils which accelerate the progress of those who are underachieving so that they catch up quickly
  - regularly checking on the progress that all different groups of pupils make and taking swift action if any group are not achieving as well as they should.

- Improve pupils' behaviour and safety by:
  - ensuring teaching is stimulating and motivates pupils well so that they develop good attitudes to learning
  - ensuring all teachers have the skills to manage pupils' behaviour effectively
  - improving record keeping so that systems are rigorous and all incidents of poor behaviour are noted along with the impact of any action taken in order to prevent reoccurrence.
  
- Improve pupils' attendance by:
  - ensuring that work with families to reduce absence is effective
  - checking and analysing patterns of absence in relation to specific groups, especially disadvantaged pupils, and using this information to identify the specific actions needed to improve attendance and reduce the proportion of pupils that are frequently absent.

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 school's 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 leadership and management are inadequate

- Senior leaders and managers have failed to bring about enough improvement since the last inspection. They have not tackled previously identified weaknesses in teaching. As a result, the quality of teaching has deteriorated and there has been a sharp decline in pupils' attainment, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2 and in the level of skills evident at the end of the early years.
- Leaders' expectations of the rate of pupils' progress, and subsequently the targets that have been set, have been too low, especially for disadvantaged pupils. Targets for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are now being reviewed but the pace of this is too slow. The timescales previously established within the school for improvement have not been met.
- Leaders and managers have not checked that the data and assessments collated and recorded about pupils' knowledge and skills are accurate. They have failed to ensure these are used to pinpoint where progress needs to speed up or to prevent pupils from falling further behind.
- The effectiveness of the leadership of subjects varies and overall is underdeveloped. The leaders of English and science have undertaken work to prepare staff for the implementation of the new curriculum in their subjects. In other subjects, there are no appointed leaders, and although the school now has plans to establish curriculum teams to lead the full range of subjects, this has not yet been put into place. This prevents the school from moving forward at a good enough rate.
- The new senior leadership team has correctly evaluated the school's weaknesses. It has set out a clear vision for improvement. Senior leaders, for example, ensure that all new staff have a mentor to help them settle in quickly. Systems to manage and measure the performance of staff, including linking this with the impact they have on raising standards for pupils, over time have been too weak and, as a result, teaching has not improved.
- The local authority has recognised weaknesses in the school's performance and has provided extensive and regular support in recent months. There has been some impact, such as the successful recruitment of new staff for this term, including two interim secondments to the senior leadership team. However, it is too early to evaluate the full impact of the support and challenge provided.
- The curriculum is suitably broad and pupils study a full range of subjects. Aspects of the school's work, such as assemblies make a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Key Stage 1 pupils were observed thoughtfully reflecting on the story of the creation along with saying prayers in a quiet and respectful manner. The school develops pupils' understanding of British values appropriately through the curriculum and through assemblies.
- Leaders and governors have not yet evaluated the impact of the spending of the primary school sports and physical education funding. Despite this, pupils take part in a range of sports, compete against other schools and understand the features of living a healthy lifestyle.
- The school communicates regularly with parents through newsletters. However, information on the school website is out of date. Parents spoken to by an inspector were supportive of the school.
- The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governance of the school is inadequate. Governors' checks on the quality of teaching and on pupils' achievement have not brought about improvement. Procedures to hold staff to account and to reward teachers who ensure that pupils make good progress are not fully in place. Governors have not been effective in providing equality of opportunity because there is too much variation in achievement between year groups, and groups of pupils. Although governors have recently undertaken training, such as how to review the data showing how well the school is performing, the data provided to them has not been accurate enough for them to do this effectively. Accuracy of assessment is being improved and new, electronic systems are now in place to measure and report to the governing body on pupils' progress, but it is too soon for any measurable impact to be seen.
  - Governors are aware of the budget deficit and have taken effective action to remove it.
  - Governors give freely of their time and are committed to the headteacher's vision for the school. They have welcomed governance support from the local authority.
  - The governing body fulfils its statutory duties in safeguarding pupils.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. Often, it is not managed well by staff and lessons are disrupted by pupils' inattention and lack of diligence in their work. At times, the pace of learning is slowed because teachers have to deal with disruption caused by a few; consequently, too many pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. Behaviour around the school, including at breaks and lunchtimes is better. However, pupils say that typically behaviour in lessons 'is not good'. Pupils dress smartly and wear their uniforms with pride.
- Where teachers' expectations are high and activities are interesting, lively and set at just the right level of difficulty, pupils respond extremely well. This was seen, for example, in a French lesson. Pupils were well motivated, showed excellent attitudes to learning and made outstanding progress. They developed and practised a good range of vocabulary, learning the words for different types of activities, such as dancing and swimming. These excellent attitudes are not evident in most lessons.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying, such as cyber-bullying and say that they know to report them to an adult. They say they are confident that adults will deal with behaviour issues and they feel safe in school. Pupils say that they are happy with standards of behaviour at playtimes and inspectors observed pupils socialising and playing together well outside during the inspection.
- Patterns of absence for different groups of pupils, such as disadvantaged pupils, are not evaluated well enough. As a result, strategies to improve pupils' attendance have been ineffective. Attendance overall has not improved and remains below average. The proportion of pupils who are frequently absent has increased and this impacts on their achievement.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. Although pupils are kept safe and say they feel safe, the school's records of incidents of misbehaviour or bullying are not kept systematically and there is no evaluation of these records to help leaders decide on what action to take in future. It is unclear from the records how well incidents are followed up to ensure that they do not reoccur.
- The school site is safely managed and areas where building work is taking place are locked so pupils cannot enter.

**The quality of teaching is inadequate**

- As a result of inadequate teaching over time, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable in reading, writing and mathematics. Low expectations, frequent staffing changes and weak teaching during the last academic year in particular, have led to a significant decline in standards across the school.
- The quality of teaching across the school, particularly of the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics, is too variable in quality. Teaching for different groups of pupils is also ineffective and results in wide variations in their rates of progress. The most able pupils, for example, are given work that is too easy and prevents them from reaching the higher levels of attainment.
- Activities do not always interest pupils and motivate them to learn. When this is the case, they show poor attitudes to learning and the quality of their work is poor. Not all teachers have the skills to manage poor behaviour well and this has an impact on the learning of others.
- Assessment information about what pupils know and can do is not used well enough in planning pupils' learning. Activities are often at one level of difficulty for all and some find them too easy while others find them too hard. Where assessment information is used well and pupils know what the teacher expects from them, they make good progress. In a writing session in Year 2, for example, pupils made good progress because they knew what features to include in their writing and the activities were structured appropriately helping them to create interesting, descriptive sentences with correct punctuation and adjectives. Too often, however, pupils are unclear of what is expected of them and this hampers their progress.
- The teaching of reading, including phonics (the sounds that letters make) is ineffective. Expectations of how much progress pupils are capable of making are too low. Activities for pupils through Key Stage 2 are not at the correct level of difficulty and fail to take enough account of what pupils need to learn next to improve.
- Pupils make slow progress in mathematics because they do not always fully understand the concepts they are working on. Work in pupils' books shows that tasks set are not difficult enough, notably for the most able, to help them achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- Pupils' work in books is marked regularly. However, pupils do not regularly respond to teachers' marking to improve their work themselves. This hinders their progress.

**The achievement of pupils****is inadequate**

- From below typical starting points when children start school, almost all groups of pupils make inadequate progress in all key stages. Unvalidated school data show that the standards attained by Year 6 pupils dipped considerably in 2014, with less than half of the pupils achieving the expected level of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics combined. This represents inadequate progress from their previously broadly average starting points at the start of Year 3.
- Progress over time as seen in pupils' work across the school and in lessons is too variable and is inadequate overall. Standards of attainment evident across the school currently are too low. Most pupils are working at a level below that typical for pupils of their age, and notably so in the current Year 6.
- Although standards at the end of Key Stage 1 improved in 2013 and were much closer to average than in previous years, unvalidated data from teacher assessments of Year 2 pupils in 2014 show that standards overall have fallen. There is a wide variation in attainment between subjects as well as too much variation between the year groups. As a result, too few pupils reached the nationally expected Level 2 in writing and mathematics. Although in 2014 the proportion reaching the higher level 3 improved in mathematics and reading, it fell in writing.
- Achievement in reading and writing is inadequate. Unvalidated results of the screening check at the end of Year 1 of pupils' understanding of phonics show that the proportion meeting the expected standard has fallen significantly in 2014 and this reflects weak teaching. In Key Stage 2 in 2014, only about two thirds of pupils achieved the expected level in reading and writing and this is lower than the proportion nationally in 2013.
- The most able pupils underachieve. Less than one tenth of pupils achieved the higher level 5 in Year 6 in 2014, and this is about half the proportion that did so in tests nationally in 2013. Work is often too easy for the most able; they are not stretched to achieve their potential.
- There is significant variation in the rate of pupils' progress between year groups and between groups of pupils. Progress for some pupils is good, such as in Year 2, whereas in others it is too slow.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make enough progress. In 2013, the attainment of these pupils, at the end of Year 6, was approximately a year behind other pupils in the year group overall in reading, writing and mathematics. However, these pupils were about one term ahead of all non-funded pupils nationally. In 2014, school data show that the gap in attainment within the school has widened further, being about a year and a half behind other pupils in school in reading, writing and mathematics. These gaps in attainment between different groups are not being closed effectively enough.
- Extra support targeted at pupils who need to catch up, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is ineffective and as a result, they underachieve.
- Targets are neither set carefully nor are they challenging enough to ensure that the progress of these vulnerable pupils is accelerated to help them catch up when they fall behind. The school does not have a clear evaluation of the impact of its work aimed at supporting these pupils. Leaders do not know which actions are being effective and which are not. This shows that the school's efforts to promote equality of opportunity or tackle discrimination are inadequate.
- Although some pupils who speak English as an additional language make better progress than other pupils, this remains variable across the school and therefore their achievement requires improvement. Teaching assistants are not always well deployed to give appropriate support when pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English.

**The early years provision****is inadequate**

- When children start Nursery or Reception, most demonstrate the skills, knowledge and understanding that are below that typical for their age. In the past, good progress has resulted in a broadly average proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the start of Year 1. However, in 2014, the proportion working at this level at the end of Reception fell significantly. Only a small minority reached a good level of development. Children's writing skills are particularly underdeveloped and the achievement of boys is notably weak. As a result, too few children are prepared well for learning in Year 1.
- Teaching in the early years, over time, is inadequate overall. Procedures to assess what children already know and can do over time have lacked the necessary rigour to ensure staff check on children's attainment and progress carefully enough to ensure that future learning activities meet children's varying

needs and abilities. Expectations of what children are capable of achieving are too low. In phonics, for example, the activities for the most able children are too easy; they do not learn new letters and sounds quickly enough to enable them to make adequate progress.

- Some recent improvements are evident, notably in the Nursery, where effective questioning helped a most able child to give considerable detail about what she knew about shapes including describing a rectangle as having 'two long sides and two short sides.' As a result, assessments are starting to improve. However, it is too early to see the impact of these improvements on improving children's achievement over time.
- Children enjoy the many opportunities they have to choose activities for themselves and they behave well. Adults supervise children appropriately and ensure that they are safe. Some children are less attentive during group sessions, when learning alongside an adult. This is because the activities are too repetitive and lack challenge.
- The updated classrooms are spacious and used well. Children have appropriate access to technology and space to develop their imaginations through role play.
- Leaders know that the development of the outdoor area is a priority. They are taking steps to improve the quality and range of resources on offer. Nevertheless, leadership and management of the early years overall is inadequate because of its ineffectiveness in ensuring that the quality of teaching is good enough and that children achieve well.



## 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>	131837
<b>Local authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	432128

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>	181
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Eileen Kelly
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Towey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 November 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 525 8552
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