

# St Aidan's Catholic Primary School

Adswood Road, Huyton, Liverpool, Merseyside, L36 7XR

**Inspection dates** 8–9 October 2014

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement in Key Stage 1 requires improvement. Attainment by the end of Year 2 in 2013 was well below average.
- Although some pupils do well in Key Stage 2, progress across the year groups is variable.
- The most able pupils do not achieve well. Work sometimes lacks enough challenge and, therefore, too few pupils reach the higher levels of attainment by the end of Year 2 or 6.
- Too little emphasis is placed on improving pupils' writing and handwriting skills; not all pupils present their work to a good standard.
- The quality of marking is variable. Not all teachers feedback clearly to pupils so that they know how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve. Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar in their written work are not always corrected.
- Leaders have not fully addressed the issue identified in the previous inspection report regarding pupils' achievement in writing. Pupils' writing skills have not improved sufficiently across the school and are too low.
- The leadership of teaching requires further improvement. Too little emphasis is placed to reviewing work in pupils' books when checking the quality of teaching. Although improving, teaching is not yet good.

### The school has the following strengths

- As a result of good leadership and teaching, children in the early years make good progress and are well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- A strong focus on encouraging pupils to read means that achievement in reading is improving strongly. The teaching of letters and the sounds they make is good.
- The headteacher ensures successfully that pupils learn within a very nurturing, caring and supportive environment. Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe at school.
- Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural understanding is good.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well. Their needs are identified quickly and learning is supported effectively.
- Senior leaders' careful analysis of pupils' performance results in an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. They know what is working well and the areas needing further improvement.
- Governance has improved. They now have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They check that the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is helping to close the gap in their attainment compared to other pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 14 lessons and part lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher and another with the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work, including the support for pupils who need extra help and for those who need extra challenge. They listened to pupils read and had discussions with pupils to establish their views of the school. Inspectors examined pupils' work in their exercise books and on display in classrooms and around the school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents. These included a summary of notable incidents, including bullying; the tracking of individual pupils' progress; the school's plan for improvement; the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils; the impact of the primary school sport funding; safeguarding and child protection arrangements and pupils' attendance records.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and the senior management team which comprises the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the early year's leader who is also the special educational needs coordinator. A discussion was held with three governors, including the Chair, and vice-chair, of the Governing Body and a representative foundation governor, and with a local authority adviser.
- The breakfast club was visited briefly by the inspectors.
- Inspectors evaluated the views of parents. Informal discussions were conducted with parents as they brought their children to school. An evaluation was made of the 14 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) alongside 50 responses to a similar paper questionnaire provided by the school for parents.
- The views of staff were considered through 21 staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Dr Prydwen Elfed-Owens, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Mr Stephen Helm	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is much higher than in most other schools. The pupil premium is additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and children in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than the national average.
- There is a nursery on site which is managed by the governing body and was therefore visited as part of the inspection. Provision is on a flexible part-time basis.
- During the last two years, there has been a high turnover of staff. A number of new teachers have been appointed, including newly and recently qualified teachers.
- In 2013, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- A breakfast club and extra-curricular activities are run by the school.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 so that it is consistently good and pupils achieve well in all year groups in order to raise standards, particularly in writing and in Key Stage 1, by:
  - ensuring that teachers consistently provide activities and tasks that challenge pupils of all abilities, including the most able.
  - making sure that all teachers feedback clearly to all pupils so that they know how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve, and that errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar in their written work are always corrected
  - placing more emphasis on improving pupils' handwriting skills and ensuring that all teachers insist that pupils always present their written work to a high standard.
- Improve leadership and management so the school's rate of improvement is good by:
  - addressing in full the issue identified in the previous inspection report regarding pupils' achievement in writing in order to speed up pupils' progress and raise standards
  - improving the rigour with which leaders check the quality of teaching and by taking into greater account the quality of teaching evidenced in pupils' books.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders are yet to fully address the issue identified in the previous inspection report regarding pupils' achievement in writing. Pupils' written work is not of a consistently good standard. The teaching of writing is not yet good. As a result, leadership and management require improvement.
- Senior leaders' careful analysis of pupils' performance results in an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. They know what is working well and the areas needing further improvement. The school's plans for improvement, for example, already point to the key areas of achievement in Key Stage 1, the most able pupils and in writing. Although some improvements are evident, such as the increased proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2014, overall the pace of improvement is steady rather than good. Although leaders ensure that all pupils are included in all that the school has to offer, pupils' progress across the year groups throughout the school is still variable and as a result, the school's promotion of equality of opportunity is not yet fully effective.
- High staff turnover has hampered the efforts of leaders to maintain consistently good teaching and leadership since the previous inspection. A number of new teachers have been appointed, including newly and recently qualified teachers. A redistribution of teaching and management responsibilities has taken place as a result. Relationships between staff are very constructive. Middle leaders are a new team and, as such, their roles are at an early stage of development. They act as 'subject champions' for the implementation of the new National Curriculum and the revised curriculum is starting to develop at a quicker pace.
- The leadership of teaching requires further improvement. Staff receive a range of in-school training and their performance is monitored. In conjunction with the local family of schools, staff have attended training aimed at improving the teaching of mathematics and physical education. Inspection evidence shows that this is now paying dividends. Achievement in mathematics, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, has improved. The headteacher and deputy headteacher regularly check the performance of staff in classrooms, for example, by observing lessons. However, efforts to check the quality of teaching are not yet fully effective. This is because too little emphasis is given to reviewing teaching over time through reviewing the work in pupils' books. Some weaknesses in teaching, therefore, remain.
- Leaders ensure that pupils receive a broad and interesting variety of experiences covering all subjects of the curriculum. Pupils particularly enjoy mathematics and physical education. Generally, pupils are now given a better range of opportunities to practice their writing skills in subjects other than in English. However, this is still patchy and does not enable them to make good progress in writing because the standard and presentation of their written work is below that expected, and errors in their work are not always picked up in teachers' marking.
- The range of topics on offer within the curriculum effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and ensures they are prepared for life in modern Britain. Well-planned enrichment activities, through clubs, residential and non-residential visits provide good quality experiences to help develop pupils' positive attitudes to learning. The breakfast club provides pupils with on-going opportunities to develop their social skills by interacting with other pupils and adults.
- The primary school sport funding has been used to widen the range of extra-curricular sport offered, as well as to build teachers' confidence and expertise in teaching different sports. As a result, pupils are taught skills more effectively and have more opportunities to participate in sporting events involving other schools. As a consequence, pupils are developing life skills and healthy lifestyles.
- The school values its partnerships with parents and families. Their views are sought through questionnaires and show that overall, parents are happy with the standard of care and the education their children receive. Information about children's progress is available to parents by half termly reports and at regular parents' evenings. The school website is easy to understand and provides a good range of information for parents. The majority of parents would recommend the school to others.
- The local authority expresses confidence that the school is able to improve upon its performance with only minimal external support, but is yet to ensure that the school's effectiveness is good.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective and meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is very committed to the school. Governors bring a varied range of professional expertise and personal skills and a detailed understanding of the community which they serve; all of which benefit the school.
  - Since the previous inspection, as a result of training, the effectiveness of the governing body has strengthened. By visiting the school more regularly governors now have a good understanding of the

quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Governors have a good understanding of the school's data and nationally published information showing how the school is performing in comparison to others. As a result, they are keenly aware that the school's key priorities are to improve the achievement of the most able pupils, writing and especially to raise standards by the end of Key Stage 1.

- Governors have played a key role in the appointment of new staff and speak knowledgeably and accurately about the appointments made. They check that arrangements to award leaders and teachers with salary increases reflect how they perform in the classroom over time and in addressing the school's priorities for development.
- Governors keep a close eye on the school's finances and how they are spent. They check that the additional money allocated to support disadvantaged pupils is having a positive impact on their achievement. They know that gaps in attainment between disadvantaged and others in the school and nationally are closing.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Relationships between pupils and adults are warm and supportive.
- Pupils are well mannered and welcoming to visitors. They are lively and generally attentive when engaged in conversation and when discussing their views in class with their peers.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and they say that good behaviour is typical of their school. A typical comment was, 'Behaviour is very good and at playtimes all children play with one another so no one will be alone.' Staff and parents agree that behaviour is good.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school reflects in their improved attendance which is now in line with the national average. More pupils arrive to school on time.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally good but not always. Pupils were unanimous in their praise of their learning in mathematics and physical education. A comment being, 'From the beginning I have got better and better and better in maths and I love PE.' Pupils sometimes show less enthusiasm for writing. They do not always present their written work to a good standard.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a very good awareness of how to keep safe, for example in relation to e-safety, road and water safety. They say that they feel safe and happy, including during breakfast and after-school clubs.
- Pupils report that incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils said, 'We are not allowed to push anyone or throw anything, we've just got to be nice to everyone.' A few pupils expressed some concern about occasional name-calling, but say that adults in the school quickly resolve any incidents. A typical comment, 'Being nasty, calling names and leaving people out goes on but only a teeny, weeny bit and if you fall everyone runs to help you.'
- Pupils feel very well cared for by all the adults and know they can go to anyone should they need help or have any concerns. They are very confident of the school's care and attention.

## The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The standard of work in pupils' books, discussions held with groups of pupils of all ages and the activities observed during the inspection confirm that the quality of teaching requires improvement. Over time, too few pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and teaching does not enable pupils across the year groups in Key Stage 2 to make consistently good progress.
- Although the school's procedures for identifying the most able pupils are good, teaching does not ensure that these pupils achieve well. Work provided sometimes lacks the necessary challenge to enable these pupils to reach their potential. Too few pupils reach the higher levels of attainment as a result.
- The quality of marking is variable and requires improvement. Not all teachers feedback clearly to all pupils about their work. This means that they do not always understand how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve further. Errors in pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar in their written work are not always picked up and as a result, some pupils continue to make the same mistakes.
- The teaching of writing requires improvement. Although pupils are now being given more opportunities to

write, including in subjects other than in English, teachers do not insist that pupils always present their written work to a good standard. Sometimes teachers' and teaching assistants' own handwriting and presentation do not provide pupils with suitable models to emulate. Too little emphasis is placed on improving pupils' handwriting skills.

- The teaching of reading is typically good. Younger pupils are taught effectively to understand the links between letters and their sounds. Guided reading sessions help older pupils to have a good understanding of the meaning of the texts they read.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are warm. There is mutual respect that provides a firm foundation for learning. As a result, behaviour and pupils' attitudes to learning are generally good.
- In most classes, teachers and teaching assistants work together well to support the needs of pupils. In Reception, Year 1 and in Year 4 classes, teaching assistants were observed using effective questioning skills to improve pupils' learning.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do well because their needs are identified quickly and teachers plan activities and support that are well matched to their particular needs.
- New staff are keen to improve their skills. Changes to the arrangements for assessing pupils' skills, for example, are being embraced but there has not yet been sufficient time for these to be embedded fully.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- In 2013, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was much lower than average in reading, writing and mathematics. Too few pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and, as a result, achievement requires improvement. Although attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has recently improved and is closer to average, it remains too low in writing.
- At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013, attainment dipped to broadly average overall; higher in mathematics than in reading and writing. Even so, this represents good progress overall from pupils' lower previous starting points. The proportion of pupils that made the expected rate of progress and the proportion that did better than this through Key Stage 2 compared favourably with the proportion that did so nationally in mathematics, reading and in writing. However, progress throughout Key Stage 2 is uneven, therefore achievement in Key Stage 2 requires further improvement. Inspection evidence shows that progress in writing in Key Stage 2 is weaker than in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' writing skills and presentation of work have not improved sufficiently since the last inspection. The work in books shows that the quality of pupils' letter formation and handwriting is well below the expected standard. Pupils do not always present their written work to a good standard.
- In Year 1, pupils have a good understanding of linking letters and the sounds they make and read accurately. The results of the Year 1 national phonics screening check showed that standards in 2013 were well above average, and this represented good progress from their individual starting points. In Key Stage 2, pupils read a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction books in guided-reading sessions. The school's emphasis on 'reading for meaning' is helping pupils to make better progress. As a result, attainment in reading has improved and is now broadly in line with national average by Year 6.
- The achievement of the most able pupils requires improvement because they are not currently making the progress of which they are capable. The proportion of the most able pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics in 2013 was below average. The school is aware of this and is now targeting individual pupils and groups so that the proportion reaching the higher levels improves. Unvalidated results from national tests in Year 6 in 2014 show an improved picture with more pupils reaching Level 5 in English and mathematics and Level 6 in mathematics and writing.
- In Year 6 in 2013, in reading, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was about two terms behind non-disadvantaged pupils in the school and around three terms behind non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. In mathematics, disadvantaged pupils were approximately two terms behind non-disadvantaged pupils in the school and nationally. In writing, they were approximately three terms behind non-disadvantaged in the school and nationally. The school's own data and inspection evidence show that these gaps are now narrowing, particularly in mathematics.
- Overall, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress and achieve better than other pupils in the school.

**The early years provision****is good**

- Provision in the early years is good and leadership is effective.
- Children enter the school with skills that are below those typical for their age. By the end of the Reception Year, a higher proportion than nationally now reach a good level of development. They are well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- Children share indoor and outdoor areas and resources at various times during the day. This ensures that the younger children settle into the Reception class quickly and confidently. Children behave well and feel safe.
- Clear and effective systems are in place for tracking children's progress and skills and the experiences provided are based on their particular learning and development needs and varying abilities.
- There is a good balance between direct teaching and child-initiated learning. The environment is interesting and overall the activities are stimulating. There is a strong emphasis on developing children's social, physical and writing skills through varied play opportunities.
- Staff place a strong emphasis on developing early reading skills through well-planned and purposeful activities. Consequently, children are confident and prepared well for reading on entry into Year 1.
- Children of all abilities make good progress because most staff encourage them to be independent, to reflect on what they are doing and learning, and to think on how they might improve and move on. However, not all adults across the early years encourage children to think critically to the same extent.
- Many informal opportunities are provided for parents to share their views about their child's learning. A very high proportion attend the meetings arranged for them to discuss their children's learning and 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>	104463
<b>Local authority</b>	Knowsley
<b>Inspection number</b>	448254

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>	198
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Annette Brannan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Moira Kenneway
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 4778370
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