

St Catherine's Catholic Primary School

Davenwood, Upper Swindon, Swindon, SN2 7LL

Inspection dates 16–17 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress across the school, particularly in writing. Those who have lower abilities in mathematics do not progress as well as they could.
- There are still gaps between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and their peers in many year groups.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good enough to ensure that pupils make the best progress they can. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes too low.
- Not all teachers have enough awareness of how writing skills are developed. Work planned in mathematics for lower ability pupils does not always provide enough challenge.
- Children in the early years do not make good enough progress. This is because information on what children can already do when they start school is not used well enough to plan next steps in learning.
- Leaders do not sufficiently check the accuracy of progress data. School improvement planning is not clear enough to drive up standards in achievement across the school.
- The executive's headteacher's report to governors does not clearly present data about pupils' progress and attainment across the different year groups. Consequently governors are hindered in their understanding of what is happening in each class. Governors do not systematically check the impact of additional funding. They do not fully hold school leaders to account.

The school has the following strengths

- This is a caring school where pupils are happy. Pupils and adults care for and respect each other.
- Since the arrival of the executive headteacher results have been steadily improving. Unpublished data for 2014 indicates that more pupils have reached the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most-able pupils are well challenged and achieve well.
- Attendance is good. Pupils' behaviour and safety are good. They are proud of their school. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and their work is well presented.
- There are good relationships with parents, who are very complimentary about the school.
- There is strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Those pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs make good progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons and part lessons, one jointly with the executive headteacher. In addition, the inspectors heard pupils read in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Books in every year group were examined, including children's work in the early years.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, the Chair and other members of the governing body and school staff. A telephone conversation was held with the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors took account of 37 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and analysed a large range of documents and policies, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress and its planning and monitoring documents. They also examined records relating to behaviour, attendance, risk analysis and safeguarding.
- The views of staff were analysed through the 21 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Keith Homewood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Catherine's Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school where all pupils attend full-time.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is lower than the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government for disadvantaged pupils.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is lower than average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage or any other White background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than the national average.
- In 2013 the school met the current government floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- St Catherine's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy in September 2012. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The leadership team consists of an executive headteacher, who is also the executive headteacher at a nearby school, and an associate headteacher.
- A section 48 inspection of religious education took place at the same time as this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is good or better by:
 - increasing teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - ensuring teachers have more awareness of how writing skills are developed so that pupils make faster progress.
- Improve achievement across the school by:
 - ensuring that gaps between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and their peers close more rapidly
 - ensuring that those pupils who have lower abilities in mathematics make consistent progress.
- Ensure that children make good progress in the early years so that they are well prepared for Year 1 by:
 - making better use of information on what children can already do when they start school to plan next steps in their learning
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - school improvement planning helps to drive up standards in achievement across the school
 - teachers are making accurate assessments of the progress of pupils in their class
 - the headteacher's report to governors clearly presents accurate data gathered about pupils' progress and attainment in the different year groups
 - governors closely monitor the impact of pupil premium spending and the progress of eligible pupils when compared with their peers across all year groups.
- 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

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because over time not enough has been done to secure consistently good progress throughout the school. There still remain significant variations in progress between the different year groups, particularly in writing and for those who have lower abilities in mathematics.
- There is greater progress in Years 2 and 6 which has ensured that at the end of each key stage many pupils reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, this masks the fact that in other classes, progress is not so strong.
- School improvement planning is too general and does not provide a clear programme of what needs to be done. As a result, pupils' progress is inconsistent. The use of assessment to drive up standards is not effective. At the beginning of each year teachers assess the progress and attainment of their pupils. This information is not checked closely enough by leaders; as a result some teachers are assessing the pupils in their class as lower than they actually are. For example, in Year 1 all the pupils were assessed as being below average; however, the moderated results when these pupils left the Reception class two months ago, showed that about half of them had made a good level of development. The school is hindered in its ability to understand exactly how each child is doing because of inconsistencies in the recording of progress.
- All leaders, including middle leaders, are working to address the inconsistencies. Strong leadership of special educational needs ensures that these pupils make good progress.
- Pupil premium funding is not used effectively enough to close the gaps in pupils' achievement in parts of the school. However, a focus of support for Years 2 and 6 pupils has ensured that, in these year groups, pupils usually make good progress.
- Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and the school fosters good relationships. However, the school does not ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed because progress and attainment vary between groups.
- The range of subjects offered is varied and interesting. Pupils reported that they liked learning about the Tudors. As one said, 'we enjoyed learning how to make daub and I know that it is smeared over the wattle to make a wall.' Pupils like the range of clubs on offer. The school prepares pupils well for life in modern and diverse Britain. British values are promoted well through the caring Christian ethos that permeates all aspects of school life.
- The school commissions occasional external support to help with training governors and assessing how the headteacher has performed over the year. The impact of this work has helped inform governors about the quality of teaching.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is well used to improve the skills of staff and enhance the physical development of pupils through sports such as football, swimming and ice skating. All pupils are encouraged to participate which improves their health and well-being.
- Since the arrival of the executive headteacher in 2012, standards in national tests have risen year-on-year. There is a stronger emphasis on the leadership of teaching and teachers are accountable for the progress of pupils in their classes. Behaviour and safety are good and pupils grow in confidence.
- There are good links with the local community. Parents are very supportive of the school.
- Safeguarding and child protection arrangements are effective and meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - is not able to hold the school fully to account for the progress of pupils. Although governors scrutinise and challenge the school on the data at the end of each Key Stage, the annual headteacher's report is not clear enough. It does not give governors clear enough information on pupils' progress and attainment in each year group, including for those pupils who are disadvantaged. As a result, their understanding of the impact of additional funds for disadvantaged pupils is limited.
 - is able to ensure that other financial resources made available to the school are used effectively and they ensure the solvency of the school.
 - ensures that safeguarding duties are carried out effectively, including for the safer recruitment of staff. Governance ensures that the school promotes tolerance for all pupils, whatever their faith or culture.
 - is aware of the quality of teaching and governors know what leadership has been doing recently to strengthen teaching. They support the school in tackling any underperformance. Pay awards for teachers are linked to the progress that pupils make.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In lessons pupils have good attitudes to learning. They behave well and listen attentively to the teacher. Pupils are keen to work hard and improve. They are proud of their work which is usually well presented.
- Rewards and sanctions are well used to promote good behaviour. Records show that there are very few incidents of poor behaviour. Parents are overwhelmingly positive and feel that behaviour at the school is good.
- There is a strong ethos of care that permeates the school. Social and moral development is strong. In one class pupils had to justify their choice on whether to keep £100 or give away £1000.
- Pupils are friendly and considerate towards each other. Pupils welcome the chance to take on responsibilities such as the school council. Older pupils show maturity and look after younger ones both in assembly and around the school. Year 6 pupils enjoy helping children in Reception.
- Pupils have a good cultural awareness. They like the names of the classes which link to towns in Italy. As one pupil said, 'In this school all roads lead to Rome as it is the name of the Year 6 class.' All pupils integrate well regardless of cultural backgrounds. They can reflect about their own faith and the faith of others. In all classes there is a display on some aspect of Christian life which enables pupils to develop their spirituality.
- Attendance is good. The school has clear systems to check attendance.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Parents consider that the school keeps pupils safe.
- Pupils have a very clear understanding about how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. Their understanding of online safety is strong. As one pupil said, 'You can't actually know who the other person is and so you can't give out your name and address or give details about your family.'
- Pupils do not consider that there are any issues regarding bullying at the school. They all have a good awareness of the different types of bullying including prejudice-based bullying and cyber-bullying.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Although there have been recent improvements, teaching has not been consistently good over time. This has led to large variations in the progress of pupils in the different classes. There are still inconsistencies because teachers do not all have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Some teachers do not have enough knowledge of how writing skills are developed. By the end of Year 6, less than half of the pupils are achieving the national average in writing.
- In mathematics, teachers do not always plan work that provides a consistent level of challenge for lower ability pupils. As a result, the progress they are making is not good enough.
- In reading, teaching has had a positive effect on achievement, as demonstrated by the good progress that pupils make.
- Teaching assistants support learning well, particularly for disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs.
- The school's marking policy is generally used consistently to help pupils understand how successful they have been in their work.
- There are warm relationships between all staff and pupils. As a result, pupils try hard in lessons and commit themselves to learning.
- Teachers support and challenge the most-able pupils sufficiently. This is because lessons are structured and work is well planned for these pupils to make good progress.
- Displays around the school show how pupils are encouraged to think about history and major world events such as the First World War. In lessons, each pupil is given a target on the 'reach for the stars' board. This helps them to remember what they need to do to improve. Other displays in classrooms help remind pupils about key facts in mathematics and English.
- Pupils are usually happy with the amount of homework that is set for them and the majority of parents feel that their children receive appropriate homework for their age.

The achievement of pupils**requires improvement**

- Progress over time has been inconsistent and varies too much between classes. This is demonstrated by the fact that when the present Year 6 class ended Key Stage 1, their attainment was in line with national averages. Now, in their final year in Key Stage 2 they are below, particularly in writing.
- The progress within year groups of disadvantaged pupils when compared to their classmates is inconsistent and gaps are not closing rapidly enough. Unpublished data for 2014 indicates that disadvantaged pupils were a term behind their peers in reading and mathematics and in line with all pupils nationally. In writing, disadvantaged pupils in this school were two terms behind their peers and about a year behind all pupils nationally. In mathematics, some lower ability pupils are working at very low standards. This is because they have had inconsistent teaching in the past which has affected their progress. For example, in the current Year 6, nearly a third of pupils are working well below the expected levels for their age.
- Because of the intensive support provided by teachers at the end of each key stage, pupils tend to catch up on previous fluctuations in progress. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils typically achieve in line with the national average in reading and mathematics. Unpublished data for 2014 indicate a trend of improvement and higher standards for all subjects.
- The most-able pupils achieve well in Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. In Key Stage 2 they achieve well in reading and mathematics. Unpublished data for 2014 indicates a trend of improving achievement. A higher proportion of pupils are gaining the higher levels, except in writing.
- Many disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because of the clearly focused support they receive.
- The achievement of those who speak English as an additional language is in line with their peers.
- Pupils enjoy reading and most read regularly at home and school. They can talk about the books they have been reading with enthusiasm. The proportions of pupils who achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics reading check (the sounds that letters make) are consistently above the national average. The results for the end of Key Stage 2 test on spelling, punctuation and grammar also have increased considerably in 2014. This is because of more focused teaching and support to groups of pupils.

The early years provision**requires improvement**

- The school does not make best use of the information on what children can do when they start school. Teachers do not clearly plan for next steps in learning to match each child's needs. Consequently, children do not achieve as well as they could. This is important as children's levels of skills and abilities when they start school vary. In 2013 they were typical for their age and in 2014 starting points were much higher.
- Teaching requires improvement because teachers and support assistants do not regularly record children's achievements. As a result, there is only limited evidence which teachers can use to measure progress. Last year a lower proportion than the national average made a good level of development. Skills were particularly low in reading and writing. Not all pupils were ready to start Year 1.
- The leadership and management of the early years provision have improved in the last two years and the impact of this can be seen in the improvements to the indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- Children in the Reception class behave well. They all get on well with each other and talk about the activities they are doing. They listen well to the teacher and enjoy listening to stories.
- There are clear procedures to involve parents before children start school. Parents are very complimentary about how welcoming the Reception class is. The start of the day is a friendly time where staff and parents can share information and children can quickly settle to activities.

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	138619
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	448653

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael McAndrew
Headteacher	Clare-Marie Burchall
Date of previous school inspection	December 2009
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