

St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School

Wexham Road, Slough, SL2 5QR

Inspection dates

21–22 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- This school has improved considerably. Pupils make good progress because the school has an exciting and challenging curriculum which is well taught.
- Leaders and the interim executive board have worked relentlessly, and successfully, to improve teaching and achievement. The school is in a strong position to continue to improve further.
- Teachers and leaders know pupils' strengths and weaknesses very well and use this knowledge to plan useful additional activities and support.
- Children get off to a sound start in Nursery. Reception has improved beyond recognition. As a result, children are being much better prepared for Year 1 than they were in the past.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are respectful of each other's backgrounds, polite around school and work hard in lessons.
- The school is a safe environment and all the necessary checks are completed to make sure pupils stay safe.
- Parents are very positive about the changes in school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are occasions where teachers lack in-depth subject knowledge and some additional adults are not as skilled as they need to be in developing early language and literacy.
- Some groups of pupils have still got a way to go to catch up on previous underachievement, particularly in Years 1 and 4.
- The school is still governed by an interim executive board and this needs to evolve into a governing body which is truly representative of the school community.

Information about this inspection

- This was the fourth time the lead inspector had visited the school since it was judged to require special measures in March 2013. The inspection started as a monitoring visit and was converted to a full section 5 inspection when inspectors were satisfied that the school no longer required special measures.
- Inspectors considered evidence from this visit and previous visits when making judgements.
- Inspectors spent much of their time in lessons, observing teaching and examining examples of pupils' progress in their work.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils, parents and teachers to gauge their views of the school. Inspectors considered the views of seven parents, through discussions during the inspection, and a further 11 who responded to the online questionnaire known as Parent View.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, middle and senior leaders, members of the interim executive board and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents, including those related to safeguarding and managing behaviour.
- Inspectors considered the school's approach to developing effective teaching alongside the school's data for tracking pupils' academic progress.

Inspection team

Mike Sheridan, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Shears

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average Catholic school.
- The school meets government floor standards, which set out the minimum standards expected at the end of Key Stage 2.
- There have been many staff changes since the last inspection. The leadership team is new and each member has been appointed at different points over the last two years. Most recently, an inclusion leader and an early years leader were appointed in September 2014.
- Most teachers have joined the school since the previous full inspection and several new appointments have been made this academic year. Currently, the school has two teachers who have been trained overseas and two Teach First graduate trainees.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- At 14%, the proportion of pupils eligible for additional pupil premium funding is below average. This funding is available for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high. Almost 70% of the school's population is believed not to speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is very high. The largest group is Polish, followed by White British and Asian or Asian British.
- The early years consists of a part-time Nursery and Reception.
- The school has received support from Upton Court Grammar School as part of a package, organised by the local authority, to assist the school through special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure pupils, particularly those who have fallen behind in the past, are given every opportunity to make rapid progress by:
 - ensuring all teachers have sufficiently in-depth subject knowledge, particularly in mathematics
 - developing the skills of all adults so they model English accurately and are skilled in supporting pupils' use of phonics for reading and spelling.
- Ensure a new governing body is established and develops to be fully representative of the school community, giving a real and active voice to parents and staff in developing the strategic plans for the school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership has changed beyond recognition. The headteacher leads a new team with an absolute focus on ensuring each child succeeds. Parents are effusive in their praise for the way the headteacher has turned the school around so pupils can flourish.
- Leaders are skilled at supporting and improving the quality of teaching. Senior and middle leaders provide effective support and challenge to teachers and other adults. As a result, teaching has improved. Teachers are very positive about the level and effectiveness of the support and professional development they receive.
- Leaders collect comprehensive information about different groups of pupils and individuals and they use this to challenge teachers and provide support. Behaviour and attendance are monitored effectively so problems are tackled and usually resolved quickly.
- Pupil premium funding is being used effectively throughout the school. Individual plans are developed for eligible pupils who need additional support, through individual tuition, extra support in class or additional small-group support. Pupil premium is also used to good effect to make sure all pupils can access the range of experiences which enrich the curriculum.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted well. The curriculum encourages pupils to see the world from different perspectives and has the notion of tolerance and mutual respect running through its core. Pupils from different backgrounds get on noticeably well together and pupils talk warmly about the way that different cultures enrich their school community. Discriminatory behaviours are extremely rare and dealt with effectively by leaders.
- The curriculum has been developed so that the full range of National Curriculum subjects is taught discretely with opportunities for pupils to use their skills in cross-curricular themed weeks. These weeks give pupils the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge while considering a cultural or artistic stimulus. In one project, for example, pupils throughout the school studied a piece of art from the National Gallery and used this as a stimulus for their own high quality work in different subjects.
- Additional funding for physical education and school sport is being used effectively to encourage more pupils to take part in sport, including competitive sport. Teachers are developing their skills by working alongside specialist coaches in physical education lessons. Coaches from professional sports clubs are brought in to work with pupils so they are motivated to try new physical activities. As a result, more pupils are taking part in extra-curricular sport, competing in sporting fixtures and enjoying physical activity.
- Local authority officers have worked alongside leaders to helpfully support them make judgements about the quality of learning and to manage the performance of teachers. The local authority has challenged leaders to think about the systems they have developed and this has helped focus leaders' minds on that which is important. They have also commissioned useful additional capacity through the interim executive board and from a local school, all of which has supported the school on its journey out of special measures.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The interim executive board (IEB) has been instrumental in driving improvements and appointing suitable leaders to take the school forward. Members' expertise, from the world of education, church and business, has served the school very well through troubled times. They have ensured the school has improved its effectiveness so that its pupils are served well. They have taken feedback very well and have made difficult decisions to move the school forward. Most members of the IEB intend to remain on the new governing body and, recently, several parents and members of staff have been recruited to ensure this new body is representative of the school community. Members of the IEB have a very clear understanding about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They have been supportive of the headteacher's efforts to eradicate weak teaching and reward the teaching that is most effective through the performance management process. The IEB has ensured that all safeguarding procedures are in place and regularly reviewed so pupils are kept safe.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well around school and mostly show consideration for each other. Very occasionally, a few pupils are silly or show off in class. Teachers deal with this quickly and without fuss.

- Pupils know what is expected of them and usually meet the high expectations that are set. Pupils are confident that adults will help them if they have a problem. The school is a harmonious and friendly place to be.
- In most cases, the behaviour of pupils in class is very impressive. Across the school, pupils work hard to complete the tasks they are given. Teachers are free to be able to teach without disruption and pupils are generally eager to please.
- Bullying is rare and dealt with effectively. Pupils enjoy each other's company and pupils from different backgrounds mix well together. Cases of racism or prejudice-based behaviour are rare and dealt with robustly.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good
- All safeguarding requirements are met and the school is a safe working environment for pupils to thrive.
- Pupils know about keeping safe; they learn about different dangers and how to avoid these. They know how to use technology safely.
- Pupils say they feel safe and trust that adults would respond if they had a concern.
- Parents are confident about the school's systems for keeping pupils safe.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved significantly since the previous full inspection. Now, teachers have higher expectations and provide work which is much more challenging. Pupils enjoy their work and demonstrate a real resilience when tackling difficult, new subject matter.
- Teachers and leaders usefully spend time looking at the performance of different groups so they can make sure their differing needs are catered for. Pupils who are new to English are given bespoke support so their language develops quickly.
- Teachers plan work that pupils find interesting. As a result, pupils try to impress their teachers with the work they do. Writing is particularly well developed because teachers have a good understanding of what makes a good piece of writing and they explicitly teach pupils the technical aspects of sentence structure and grammar.
- In mathematics, teachers provide challenging work and opportunities to practise basic skills. However, in some cases, gaps in teachers' own subject knowledge limit the effectiveness of teaching, particularly for the most-able pupils.
- Most adults effectively support younger pupils in developing their grasp of spoken English. However, in some cases, additional adults do not have a sufficiently good grasp of how children learn to read and spell using phonics (the sounds that letters make). Where this is the case, these adults sometimes give pupils incorrect advice and examples. Similarly, some adults working with pupils who are new to English do not always model correctly spoken English, at times reinforcing a child's mistakes.
- Most support given to pupils is effective. Pupils new to English make good progress and most pupils who have fallen behind are catching up.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Achievement has improved considerably. Many pupils had fallen behind in the past and some excellent teaching and intervention helped last year's Year 6 reach above-average attainment. This was significantly higher than in previous years when standards were below average. Last year's leavers were more than a year ahead of leavers from the previous three years.
- All pupils in school currently, including those eligible for pupil premium funding, are making much better progress than they have in the past. In most year groups, disadvantaged pupils have either caught up with their peers or are catching up.
- In Year 6, last year, the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in school did not close because all pupils made accelerated progress. However, the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils in this school and all other pupils nationally closed considerably. Disadvantaged pupils were about two terms behind other pupils nationally in mathematics, and about a term behind other pupils nationally in writing. In reading, disadvantaged pupils closed the gap completely, reaching levels of attainment in line with the national average. Overall the gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally closed by over two terms' worth of learning last year.
- Pupils throughout the school are making better progress than in the past. There is clearly a legacy of

underachievement which still exists, particularly in Year 4 and Year 1. In these year groups, work in books shows that pupils are currently making better progress.

- There is no particular pattern across the school for groups who are behind. In general, each year group has a particular group who are underachieving when compared to their peers, be that pupils who speak English as an additional language, White British pupils or those with special educational needs. The school has very detailed information about where underachievement exists and plans in place to support individual pupils to help them catch up. Inspection evidence shows that these plans are proving effective in helping pupils and groups to make better progress.
- The most-able pupils are making good progress. Those who have fallen behind in the past are given every opportunity to catch up and this has led to a much higher proportion of pupils last year reaching the higher levels in Key Stage 2 tests than was the case nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. Early support, which is regularly reviewed, helps to make sure these pupils' additional needs are catered for. Last year, this group of pupils, in Year 6, made less progress than their peers over the key stage. Although they did catch up somewhat in Year 6, they did not manage to overcome previous failings completely.

The early years provision

is good

- The early years has improved considerably. Children make a sound start in Nursery so those who attend are ready for the challenges of Reception class.
- There is a strong focus on developing language across the early years. Adults work well to support children who are new to English and interesting activities give children and adults plenty to talk about. One example saw children chipping away at a block of ice to release the encased plastic animals. Adults working with these children modelled good language and encouraged children to describe with increasingly accurate detail what they were doing.
- Children become increasingly clear about how to behave in different situations. Staff in Nursery and Reception are consistent in their expectations of appropriate behaviour in different circumstances. Children are happy in the safe and stimulating environment.
- Leaders are clear about what they are striving to achieve. They have a good understanding of the different areas of learning and a credible strategy for developing children's skills, through activities which are both interesting and challenging.
- Last year's Reception class did not reach levels of development which adequately prepared them for Year 1, although they did partly catch up in the latter part of the year. The current Reception class is in a much stronger position and the children are likely to be well prepared to start Year 1 with the skills and knowledge they need.

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	110039
Local authority	Slough
Inspection number	446192

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	400
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Italo Cafolla
Headteacher	Sarah Murphy-Dutton
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 March 2013
Telephone number	01753522048
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