

St Adrian's Catholic Primary School

Watling View, St Albans, AL1 2PB

Inspection dates 13–14 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Not all teachers consistently set pupils demanding work, especially for the most able. Consequently, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should in Key Stage 2.
- Teachers do not always check pupils' learning and progress carefully or frequently enough in lessons to help them avoid repeating mistakes.
- Not all teachers mark pupils' written work in enough detail to tell them what they need to do to improve, or ensure pupils respond to these comments in their subsequent work.
- Standards and progress require improvement in Key Stage 2. Pupils are not always clear about what they are expected to achieve.
- The good start pupils make in mathematics in Key Stage 1 is not sustained, and some underachieve in this subject by the time they leave the school.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, managers and governors make sure that teaching and achievement in Key Stage 1 are good. Standards are greatly improved in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils behave well. They are polite and courteous, show interest in the tasks they are set and say they enjoy coming to school.
- Parents, staff and pupils agree with inspection findings that the school's work to keep pupils safe is outstanding.
- The early years provision is outstanding and children make excellent progress.
- The school gives strong support to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons, including 10 seen with members of the senior leadership team. The inspectors made short visits to other lessons and to an assembly. They looked at samples of pupils' work, interviewed groups of pupils and heard pupils read from across the age range.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team, subject coordinators, teachers, members of the governing body, representatives of the local authority and a group of six parents.
- Inspectors scrutinised a variety of documents, including: the school's self-evaluation summary, school development plans, behaviour records, safeguarding records, governing body documents, and documents relating to the management of teachers' performance.
- Inspectors also considered the views expressed in 30 questionnaires returned by school staff and 91 responses submitted by parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

Inspection team

Roger Waddingham, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Fiona Robinson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Adrian's Catholic Primary is an average-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years attend the Nursery part time and the Reception classes full time.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average, at about one in every 11 pupils in the school.
- About one in every 14 of the pupils is known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, which is well-below average. This is additional funding allocated by the government for pupils who are looked after or known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils of minority ethnic heritage is the same as that found in most schools. A below-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- Following the extended absence of the headteacher in 2013, there has been a significant change to the senior leadership team with the appointment of a new deputy headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to be at least consistently good by making sure that:
 - teachers plan learning that fully challenges all pupils, especially the most able, and that pupils know what they are expected to achieve
 - teachers check pupils' learning and understanding frequently during lessons and give them the help they need to make good progress
 - the marking of pupils' written work makes clear what they need to do to improve, and that pupils consistently follow up this guidance.
- Improve achievement in Key Stage 2 by:
 - making sure that pupils of all abilities make good progress in mathematics, through improved planning of work and clearer expectations for pupils of different abilities and more informative marking of pupils' written work.
 - ensuring that the most-able pupils make consistently good progress in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders provide strong and effective leadership from the early years provision onwards. They have a clear view of how to improve the school because action is based on a thorough and regular review of pupils' progress and of teaching. They ensure the school reflects positive attitudes to learning and great care for the individual.
- The school leadership team is now well established after recent changes in structure and the long-term absence of key staff. The school's current capacity to improve teaching and raise standards is demonstrated well by the positive impact on pupils' progress and better teaching already evident in Key Stage 2.
- The school's arrangements for evaluating and improving teaching are well organised and teaching is now improving well. Leaders and managers gather a good range of evidence to identify points for development and staff recognise that their professional training needs are met well.
- Whole-school and subject action plans are well coordinated and their impact is reviewed regularly through discussions with line managers and review visits carried out by link governors, so that necessary improvements are identified quickly. The effectiveness of different arrangements for teaching groups is also kept under close review.
- The emphasis placed on the regular tracking of pupils' attainment and progress is leading to a strongly improving trend of achievement. Subject coordinators are competent managers and support senior leaders in using this information very effectively to check progress in each class. All leaders and managers make sure the need for extra support is identified carefully.
- The accuracy of staff assessments of pupils' attainment is checked regularly and good consistency is maintained. The school is making good progress in implementing its new assessment arrangements.
- The school offers well-planned learning experiences for pupils through school subjects and a good range of out-of-school activities, catering particularly well for the personal and physical development of pupils.
- Primary sports funding is used well to train staff in teaching physical education and to extend the range of competitive games and physical activities available to pupils. Uptake of sports clubs and other after-school activities is high and benefits pupils' physical fitness.
- The support for disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and the small numbers of disadvantaged pupils is well managed and most pupils are currently making good progress. The impact of support from specialist staff is monitored carefully by the coordinator and adjusted appropriately in the light of pupils' progress. The pupil premium funds are used effectively.
- Support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. Topics relating to life in modern Britain promote tolerance and respect for people of other cultures and faiths, so that pupils show positive attitudes to living in a modern democratic society.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Staff are well trained in both welfare and safety procedures. Leaders have a clear commitment to equality of opportunity and ensuring there is no discrimination.
- The local authority gives some useful support to the school through termly reviews and training sessions on teaching and mathematics.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors use their skills and experience well to hold the school to account. They manage their

meetings very effectively and records are well maintained. They review their own expertise and undertake training as needed.

- Governors are confident in their use of performance data for analysing teaching effectiveness and pupils' progress. They effectively manage teachers' performance and ensure that appointments to the upper pay scale represent value for money based on pupils' progress and attainment.
- They have a good grasp of key development priorities and use reports from senior managers and first-hand evidence from their own regular school visits to monitor progress towards planned objectives.
- Governors inform themselves well about spending pupil premium and sports funding, and check the impact carefully.
- They know and authorise changes planned for the curriculum and assessment and ensure these strongly promote key values, such as tolerance and understanding of others' beliefs.
- Governors have good links with the local community and ensure that the views of parents are taken into account when developing school policies.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They say that they enjoy coming to school and find their work in lessons interesting. Their politeness, courtesy and concern for others contribute very well to the harmonious working atmosphere in the school.
- The outstanding behaviour of children in the early years sets the tone for positive attitudes throughout the school. They show excellent motivation and concentrate very well on their chosen activities.
- Behaviour in lessons in the main school is good. Pupils arrive at lessons on time and ready to learn. They pay good attention to what they are being told by teachers and follow instructions carefully. They concentrate well on their work and sustain their interest throughout lessons when working both in groups and individually. There have been no exclusions for several years.
- Pupils of all ages respect each other and adults. The start of the school day and break times are orderly and pupils show a good degree of responsibility in playing sensibly together. They show respect for the school buildings and move around the school in a safe and responsible manner.
- They enjoy taking responsibility for aspects of school life and take part readily, for example, in the work of the school council and in charity work. Pupils' develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding very well as a result of their positive attitudes to all aspects of school life.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Access to the school is very secure and staff are rigorously checked prior to appointment. All staff are trained in a wide variety of safety procedures and receive regular updates which help them run highly effective programmes for pupils.
- Pupils, parents and staff rightly have high levels of confidence in the school's procedures to deal with any bullying or racial incidents. The highly positive comments from pupils and staff about the very low incidence of bullying are supported very well by the school's detailed records.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in the school. They receive excellent support from the school on a wide range of safety topics, including online safety and work on transport safety with visiting experts.
- Parents say they are very well informed about the school's work to keep pupils safe through newsletters and the school website.
- The school has excellent procedures to promote good attendance and punctuality. As a result, attendance is high and persistent absence is minimal.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it has not had a sufficiently positive impact over time on pupils' learning and achievement in literacy, reading and mathematics in Key Stage 2 to enable them to achieve well. Monitoring by senior staff has identified where improvements are needed, and these have been followed up carefully so that teaching is now good in English and improving in mathematics.
- Teaching in Key Stage 2 does not consistently make clear to pupils what they are expected to achieve. Not all teachers have sufficiently high expectations to ensure good progress for all pupils, especially that of the most able.
- Many teachers use questioning very well to help identify any problems that younger pupils may have with their learning. However, not all teachers in Key Stage 2 check pupils' learning and progress carefully or frequently enough in lessons. This means that they do not provide all individuals with the help they need to overcome difficulties in starting a task or to avoid repeating mistakes, resulting in slower progress.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' written work does not consistently give enough guidance to tell them what they need to do to improve. Consequently, some pupils are not sure what to do when they are given opportunities to respond to teachers' comments.
- In many subjects and topics, teachers use their good subject knowledge to make learning challenging and engage pupils well in Key Stage 1. Teaching is outstanding in early years provision. Children's excellent development of language and communication skills was seen to be stimulated by a well-timed visit of a veterinary surgeon, which led to great interest in discussing the equipment used.
- Teachers' management of classroom behaviour is good overall and sometimes excellent. The school policy for rewards and sanctions is followed consistently well by all staff, with a very positive impact on pupils' behaviour, interest in their work, and their learning and progress.
- Teachers check pupils' overall progress through regular formal assessments. Senior leaders and managers use this information well to consider with each teacher whether pupils need further support to accelerate progress.
- Teaching assistants work well with teachers in class to support the progress of less-able pupils. Many show good skill in the questions they ask to test pupils' understanding.
- Homework is used appropriately to set tasks that give pupils opportunities to practise what they have learned in reading, writing and mathematics. Recent developments in the use of online resources to provide homework in mathematics are described very positively by pupils and parents.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement and progress vary too much. Achievement is outstanding in the early years provision, good in Key Stage 1, but requires improvement in Key Stage 2.
- Attainment in Key Stage 2 has fallen over the past three years and was slightly below national results in reading, writing and mathematics in 2014, with pupils making below average progress. This underachievement was due largely to weak teaching in the past. The school has developed teaching and the provision for individual pupils well in the past year, so that now progress is good in English and improving in mathematics.
- Although younger pupils make good progress in mathematics, this is not sustained into Key Stage 2, where the rate of progress has been below the national expectation. Current pupils in Year 6 are currently doing better in lessons, but because of slow progress in the past they are still not achieving well.
- The most able in early years provision and in Key Stage 1 achieve well. In Key Stage 2, the most able

pupils do not always make good progress, because the work set is not demanding enough. They do not see enough high-quality work to guide them in what to aim for. Nevertheless, in 2014, Year 6 pupils' attainment of the higher levels was ahead of national results in reading, writing and mathematics.

- The school has an effective system for checking the progress of disadvantaged pupils and for arranging effective individual support programmes. Current pupils were seen to be making good progress.
- Very few pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding in each year and, consequently, results cannot be reported with confidence and have varied widely. For example, in 2014, disadvantaged pupils attained similar levels to their classmates in writing, while in reading and mathematics they were up to six terms behind. Other recent years show equally wide variations. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment compared to national figures usually reflects the difference within the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in Key Stage 1 are making good progress from their different starting points. Older pupils are currently benefiting from well-planned support building on progress that has been less secure in the past. Their progress is improving and, currently, often good.
- The progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic backgrounds is in line with that of others across the school.
- Year 1 pupils make good progress in their work on phonics (the sounds that letters make). In the 2014 national reading check, their results were above average. Pupils develop their communication skills well. They speak and read aloud with confidence in a variety of situations. Less-confident readers are helped to interpret more difficult texts.
- Pupils' research and writing skills develop well through opportunities for extended writing across subjects. Although there have been weaknesses in pupils' basic numeracy, they apply their mathematical and problem-solving skills well in other subjects, such as in science. Overall, pupils have the confidence and the enthusiasm to apply a good range of skills in their future learning.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Leadership and management are outstanding, with a highly positive impact on children's achievement and behaviour. For example, children make a rapid start to their development because the very good links that have been set up with external providers and detailed home visits with parents mean that children's learning needs are met very well as soon as they join the school.
- Children's rapid progress has been maintained over time because of consistently strong teaching, which is better than elsewhere in the school. Children leave the Reception year with high levels of confidence and achievement. They continue to make strong progress in Year 1 because the detailed record keeping in the early years enables teachers to set demanding targets for their future work.
- Staff track children's individual progress very carefully so that the work planned builds very well on their current achievement in all key areas of learning. The rapid development of children's phonic understanding, their numeracy skills and their work in expressive arts are notable strengths of the planning of learning.
- Children enter school with skills in line with those typical for their age. They make outstanding progress in both the Nursery and Reception classes because their opportunities for learning are well matched to their interests and offer a very good level of challenge. By the end of the Reception Year nearly all children reach at least the expected goals in all areas of learning and many exceed them.
- Children from all social and ethnic backgrounds, including the few at an early stage in learning English, make particularly good progress in developing their communication, literacy and creative skills.
- Teaching has many strengths and, over time, is outstanding. Staff use the indoor and outdoor learning

spaces for play and exploration activities very effectively to develop children's confidence and social skills. They promote children's development of reading and writing very well through excellent knowledge of phonics.

- Children are very well trained in class routines, and show patience in taking turns and sharing. Expectations for good behaviour are well established so that no time is wasted when children are working as a class, on their own, or when moving between activities. Their behaviour is excellent. Children are kept very safe in school.

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	117470
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	449343

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	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Belt
Headteacher	Yvonne Hawkes
Date of previous school inspection	28 April 2008
Telephone number	01727 852687
Fax number	01727 850822
Email address	admin@stadians.herts.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

