

St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Lightwood Road, Buxton, SK17 7AN

Inspection dates 6–7 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Major disruption in several areas of school life adversely affected pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.
- Leadership and governance were not good enough in recent years to ensure that teaching and pupils' progress were consistently good. As a result pupils' achievement has declined, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Leaders' planning for future improvement is not focused sharply enough on raising pupils' achievement.
- Teachers do not focus enough on teaching and assessing the skills pupils need to acquire year on year in the subjects they teach through topics.
- Teachers' marking does not always help pupils to improve their work.
- Teaching in the early years is not good enough to help the children make good progress. Adults do not always interact effectively with the children to move their learning on. The outdoor area is not used fully to support and extend learning.
- Not all parents are happy with the way the school communicates with them.

The school has the following strengths

- The new, stronger senior leadership team has been instrumental in improving teaching and learning this year.
- Staff at all levels are now working together to raise standards and ensure pupils make faster progress.
- The school is using additional funding well to close the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other groups.
- The governors have made excellent use of an external review of their work to improve their effectiveness. As well as supporting the school, they are now challenging its performance robustly.
- Adults and pupils get along well together. , Pupils' safety, welfare and well-being are of paramount importance.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils feel safe and enjoy learning. They are proud of their school and want to do well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in parts of 25 sessions. Senior leaders joined inspectors for four of these observations.
- Inspectors sampled sessions where phonics (the sounds that letters make) were being taught. They analysed the work in pupils’ books and talked to pupils formally and informally about their work and about the school. Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour at play and lunchtimes. They listened to some pupils reading.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 37 parents who responded to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also gained the views of parents directly as they brought their children to school, and took account of letters and phone calls from parents.
- Inspectors also considered the 12 responses to the questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the school’s data on current pupils’ progress, its self-evaluation document and the school improvement plan. They evaluated other planning and monitoring documents, including those relating to teaching, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors held discussions with senior and other leaders, two governors, various members of staff and a representative of the local authority.

Inspection team

Doris Bell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Timothy McGuire

Additional Inspector

Linda Griffiths

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is broadly average. This funding is for pupils who are in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Reception-aged children attend school on a full-time basis.
- The governing body was completely restructured in September 2014. The restructure followed a period of significant instability for the school, during which there were also several changes in staffing.
- A deputy headteacher, the first the school has had for many years, took up post in January 2015. This allowed the school to complete a realignment of leadership and management responsibilities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and pupils' progress, particularly in writing and mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - the work pupils are given to do develops their skills well in all subjects
 - the written feedback teachers give to pupils always helps to move their learning on
 - pupils' handwriting, spelling, grammar and punctuation skills improve so that their written work is neat, legible and easy to understand
 - all staff who teach mathematics use the correct mathematical vocabulary and fully understand how to deepen pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts.
- Strengthen the impact of all leaders and managers on pupils' progress by:
 - completing and implementing the work on assessment so that staff are clear about how to measure pupils' progress without having levels to which they can refer
 - including in the school improvement plan, milestones that relate to increases in pupils' progress, so leaders can measure how well they are achieving their priorities.
- Improve teaching and progress in the early years by ensuring that:
 - when children choose activities themselves, adults interact with them to help strengthen their communication skills and build on their learning as it happens
 - the outdoor area is used effectively so that children can experience all aspects of learning well, indoors and out.
- Improve communication with parents, including the way the school handles and responds to their concerns.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management have not been good enough to sustain consistently good teaching and learning since the previous inspection. Consequently, standards and pupils' progress have declined. Several issues to do with staffing, communication with parents and governance combined to cause the situation. These issues have now been resolved and the new leadership team this year is reversing the decline. However, it has not yet done enough to ensure that good teaching and achievement have been re-established throughout the school and in all subjects.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is too generous. This is because it is based on the improvements this year, which are evident in the pupils' work, rather than what has happened to pupils' attainment and progress over a longer period since the last inspection.
- The school improvement plan shows that leaders have an accurate view of what needs to be done to raise standards. However, the actions to reach the priorities set are not linked closely enough to pupils' progress. This limits leaders' ability to evaluate the full effectiveness of their actions and, therefore, improve achievement more quickly.
- Senior leaders and key subject leaders such as those in charge of English and mathematics regularly check the quality of teaching and learning. Their accurate evaluations lead to appropriate training and support for staff. For example, well-targeted training from the local authority is proving effective because it is giving teachers greater confidence in teaching mathematics.
- Teachers are held to account through meetings with senior leaders to discuss their pupils' progress and the targets set as part of the management of their performance. These individual targets are linked to those in the school improvement plan. As they monitor progress towards the targets, senior leaders provide guidance for staff, or point them towards training, to help them become more effective.
- Decisive action to improve the school is evident in the restructuring of the governing body and the strengthening of the senior leadership team. Initiatives to improve the consistency of teaching and raise achievement are beginning to prove successful but they have not yet led to continuous and rapid improvement in teaching and learning.
- The school has successfully implemented the new National Curriculum. Lessons, activities and topics are engaging and encourage pupils to want to find out more for themselves. The curriculum supports writing well through different subjects.
- The school is developing systems to assess pupils' progress within the new curriculum. This work is limited because it does not focus sufficiently on the skills that pupils should acquire progressively in each year group.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils know right from wrong, respect each other and learn how hurtful any form of discrimination can be. The school teaches them these things well. Pupils also learn about different faiths and cultures in this country and abroad, as well as the importance of the rule of law, tolerance towards and respect for others, and how to contribute effectively to the school and the community. By doing all of this, the school promotes British values well.
- The school is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all. For instance, through good use of the pupil premium funding, the gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school and nationally have narrowed. Additionally, the help and guidance provided for pupils who find learning difficult, for whatever reason, are good.
- The school has used the national primary school sports funding well to increase pupils' participation in sporting activities. Specialist teachers and coaches work with staff and pupils to improve their skills, and reluctant pupils are sensitively encouraged to join in. New equipment has been purchased and the wider range of activities now available after school and during the day are all well attended.

- The local authority intensified its support for the school when it noted standards were declining. The school has used that support and support from the diocese well to improve leadership and management, including governance. All of this is having a positive impact on teaching and learning.
- The headteacher has provided stability for the school during difficult times. She, the governors and all other leaders are ambitious for the pupils. They have created a positive climate for learning in which pupils attend regularly, behave well and want to learn. They also ensure that pupils are assisted well at times of transition, for example to high school.
- Safeguarding procedures, including those for child protection, meet the government's current requirements and are effective. Staff are trained well to identify pupils at risk of harm and take the necessary steps to help them. The school works closely with the relevant agencies to tackle any issues that arise. Risk assessments are carried out for all activities. Electrical testing, fire safety checks and fire drills are all up to date. The school is safe and secure for the pupils.
- Parents raised some concerns in the online questionnaire. Some of these concerns surprised senior leaders because they were not previously aware of them. The school should be doing more to communicate well with parents and keep them up to date on all aspects of its work, including via its website.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has improved significantly since it was restructured last September, and is playing an increasingly effective role.
 - The members of the governing body are highly committed to the school. They know what it does well and what it needs to improve. They have made excellent use of the external review of governance, visits to school and discussions with staff, pupils and parents to hone their skills and to gather first-hand information about the school's work. They make effective use of training to keep themselves up to date.
 - The governors now have a good range of expertise, which they bring to bear in holding the school to account for its performance. They know how teachers' performance is managed and that pay is related to it. They support the headteacher in making decisions about pay and tackling underperformance.
 - The governors now have a good grasp of data. They interpret information about pupils' progress accurately and are beginning to use it well when questioning leaders about the school's performance. Minutes of governing body meetings show that they now challenge the school robustly. Governors recognise the improvement this year and are determined to accelerate it.
 - The governors manage finances well. They know the impact that pupil premium funding is having on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and they are now beginning to monitor the effectiveness of the primary sports funding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. Pupils concentrate well in class and try hard to succeed. Parents, staff and governors who spoke with inspectors all say that behaviour is good.
- Pupils say that behaviour is good most of the time. They behave sensibly when moving around the school. Their good behaviour helps to ensure that lunchtimes and breaks are orderly and contributes to the calm and peaceful environment in the school. Pupils acknowledge that some pupils have difficulty behaving well, but also say they know how to ignore such behaviour so that their learning is not disrupted.
- Pupils are unanimous in saying that the school rules are fair. They understand how rules help an organisation to function effectively. They describe their teachers as being fair and honest and refer to the school motto and how everyone tries to live up to it. All of this contributes to their understanding of British values.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are courteous and polite to adults and to each other. They are also smartly dressed, proud of their school and keen to do well. For a minority, however, the presentation of

their work is sometimes untidy, particularly in writing books.

- Pupils are especially keen to take on board responsibilities as, for example, school councillors and play leaders. Elections to the school council give pupils an understanding of how democracy works, as did the work on the general election that took place during the inspection.
- The school's work with families and, where necessary, external agencies, ensures that most pupils attend school regularly and on time.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that they know they can turn to any member of staff if they have any concerns.
- Pupils know the different forms bullying can take. They report that bullying does happen but is rare. They say that, because of the work done during anti-bullying week, everyone knows how the school's anti-bullying systems work. They talk proudly of their involvement, via the school council, in helping to create these systems.
- Pupils also have a good understanding of cyber-bullying. They know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. For example, they talked about not opening 'pop-ups' or attachments, and know to seek the advice of an adult if they are ever unsure of any online activity.
- Pupils have a good understanding of most forms of prejudice. They say, for example, that people should not be treated differently because they follow a different faith, or because of where they come from or what they look like. As a consequence, incidents of name-calling are very rare.
- The school's work focusing on the social and emotional aspects of learning gives pupils many opportunities to talk and learn about safety issues. Assemblies provide opportunities for visitors to talk to the pupils and raise their awareness of the wider world.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, teaching has not been good enough to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress and achieve well. The work in pupils' books shows that the actions taken this year to improve teaching are leading to better learning, but teaching is not yet securely good.
- The effectiveness of teachers' marking is variable. Pupils do not always get clear guidance on how to improve their work. This is because comments are not always clear enough to help pupils understand what they need to do.
- Most staff are now using 'fix-it' time to give pupils the chance to respond to marking. Where the comments are not clear, pupils ask further questions or just write, for example, 'Thanks'. This suggests that marking has not moved their learning on.
- Some teaching does not focus pupils well enough on writing neatly and legibly. Pupils know their writing targets and they regularly assess and mark their own and each other's work. However, the comments they write are not always legible or easy to read. On these occasions, they do not help to move learning on.
- As a result of well-chosen staff training, the teaching of phonics is better than in the past. Teachers make sure pupils have enough opportunities to practise writing at length and increasingly in different subjects. This is helping their writing to improve.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving as a result of focused training by the local authority and the reorganisation of the teaching of mathematics in Year 6. Occasionally, however, some staff do not use the correct mathematical vocabulary, for example, in Reception where children were learning the properties of shapes and in Year 6 where the terms 'less' and 'fewer' were used incorrectly.

- A new initiative, together with recent training, has enabled teachers to help pupils gain confidence in applying their skills to various problem-solving activities in mathematics. This was evident from discussions with pupils and the work in their books.
- Well-briefed teaching assistants provide helpful support as they work with small groups of pupils and individuals. Their work particularly helps disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs as well as disadvantaged pupils.
- Good relationships are evident throughout the school as pupils are successfully encouraged to work together, share ideas and learn from each other. The use of praise and encouragement is a strong feature of teaching. Staff encourage pupils to try harder. Pupils report that teachers make learning interesting and want them to do well.
- Improvements in teaching have ensured that effective questioning, good subject knowledge and lively teaching encourage pupils to listen very carefully to what their teachers have to say. As a result, pupils follow instructions well, ask as well as answer questions, and are not afraid to make a mistake.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Given that children start school with skills that are typical for their age, pupils' average overall standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 show that progress requires improvement. Attainment and progress declined after the previous inspection, most significantly in mathematics in Year 6.
- By the time pupils left Year 6 in 2014, standards were average in reading and writing but below average in mathematics. The proportions of pupils who exceeded expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics did not compare favourably against national averages.
- The work seen in lessons and pupils' books, discussions with staff and pupils and the school's own data show that pupils' progress is improving, particularly in Year 6, but is not yet uniformly good across the school.
- The results of the phonics screening test for pupils in Year 1 were below average in 2014 but had improved on the previous year. From September 2014, changes in the system the school uses to teach phonics have had a positive effect on pupils' learning. Pupils currently in Year 1 use their phonics skills well, when reading and writing, to help them work out how to read and spell unfamiliar or tricky words.
- Throughout the school, pupils enjoy reading. They read widely at home and at school and demonstrate good comprehension skills. Pupils in Year 3, for example, quickly learned to draw conclusions about an author from a range of information given to them, which they used to highlight key features and characteristics of the author's work.
- While writing is improving, and more pupils made good progress in writing than in reading or mathematics in 2014, errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling still sometimes make reading pupils' work difficult. In addition, as late as Year 5, letters are not always formed well enough to make handwriting legible.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 were around half a term ahead of other pupils in the school in reading, one term in writing and one and a half terms in mathematics. When compared with pupils nationally, they were around one term behind in reading, and half a term behind in writing and mathematics. The school successfully narrowed the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally in 2014. Data for different year groups within the school show that, despite some fluctuations, these gaps are narrow year on year and progress for this group of pupils is increasingly good.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs requires further improvement. The help and guidance given to these pupils are now led and managed well and staff are keeping a close eye on how well each pupil is doing.

- Progress also requires improvement for the most-able pupils in the school. In 2014, not enough pupils capable of doing so reached the higher standards in the national tests. While progress is improving for the most-able pupils currently in the school, occasionally these pupils do not have hard enough work to do in lessons, or are not moved onto the harder work prepared for them as quickly as they could be.
- Pupils are enjoying the increased opportunities for sport and physical education available to them through the primary sports funding. Around 70% of the pupils take part in clubs and other activities, including competitive sport. During the inspection, despite the inclement weather, the whole school participated wholeheartedly in the national initiative to spend 15 minutes exercising together in the playground.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- In most years, children start school with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. In 2014, the proportion reaching a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year was below that found nationally. This shows that progress for children in that particular year group was inadequate.
- The progress of children currently in Reception requires improvement. When children's work at the start of the year is compared with their most recent work, it is clear that some are making good progress. The annotations on the children's work do not give a clear picture of progress against the requirements for the age group. Nevertheless, children's work and data held by the school show that a greater proportion are on track to reach a good level of development than was the case last year.
- The leadership and management of the early years require improvement. The leader is new in post and, while changes are afoot, the outdoor area is not used well enough to promote all aspects of learning.
- Teaching requires improvement. Much work is adult-directed and when children do choose activities for themselves, adults do not always talk to them enough about what they are learning, in order to move it forward. Therefore, some children tend to drift around activities, not quite sure of what they are learning and adults do not check how well they are doing.
- Children learn to share, take turns and help each other. They form good relationships with each other and with adults, and follow routines and instructions well. They listen carefully to what they are told and behave well. The school is vigilant in supporting the children's health, safety and well-being. It keeps the children safe and teaches them how to keep themselves safe.
- Children start to develop early reading and writing skills as they learn letters and sounds. They also acquire early mathematical skills as they learn to count and to calculate, and to name different shapes. Staff make appropriate use of the information gained from assessing how well the children are doing to plan further work.
- Staff work closely with parents to ensure children are looked after well. They also liaise well with pre-school providers to help the children prepare for 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	112897
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	455986

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	315
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lorraine Gavin
Headteacher	Claire Sierotko
Date of previous school inspection	May 2012
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