

# St Brendan's Catholic Primary School

Beanfield Avenue, Corby, NN18 0AZ

**Inspection dates** 13–14 May 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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

- Teachers do not always set work at the right level for pupils' different abilities.
- The quality of support provided by teaching assistants is variable.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are not consistently good.
- Pupils' overall attendance has dipped to below average.
- Not all teachers apply the school's calculation policy consistently.
- Teachers' marking and assessment are improving. However, marking still varies in quality between subjects and teachers.
- Pupils do not achieve as well as they should at the end of Year 2, particularly in mathematics.
- Too few of the most-able pupils are predicted to achieve a Level 6 in writing at the end of Year 6 or a Level 3 in mathematics at the end of Year 2.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is not as good as it should be in some year groups.
- Children in the early years, including boys and those who speak English as an additional language, do not improve their skills in reading, writing and speaking as well as they should.
- The quality of teaching in the early years is not consistently good.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has re-instilled the school's values and rapidly improved teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is impressive. The arrangements to keep pupils safe are good.
- Governors know the school well and are aware of its strengths and weaknesses.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good.
- The proportion of pupils expected to achieve the expected standard in phonics (the sounds that letters make) in Year 1, exceeds national averages.
- Pupils' progress in reading is good.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 10 lessons; three were jointly observed with the deputy headteacher.
- An inspector visited several classes to check on pupils' learning in phonics.
- Inspectors scrutinised work from a range of pupils, in mathematics and English.
- An inspector listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the coordinator for special educational needs and other subject leaders. The lead inspector also spoke with the senior school improvement officer from the local authority and two members of the governing body.
- An inspector spoke with members of the school council. Inspectors spoke informally with a number of pupils in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors took into account the 26 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.
- There were not enough responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, to draw any conclusions.
- Inspectors reviewed a variety of documents, including, the school's self-evaluation summary, the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, anonymised performance management documents, records of referrals made to external agencies, and records on attendance and behaviour. An inspector examined information about the school's predictions for pupils' achievement in 2015.

## Inspection team

Julia Wright, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Stephen McMullan

Her Majesty's 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

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years attend full time.
- Most pupils are White British. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds or speak English as an additional language. The proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds is increasing in the early years.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for looked after children.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is just above average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher has been in post since July 2014. Since the last inspection, the deputy headteacher has taken over responsibility for leading the early years.
- The school is working in partnership with a Hall Meadow, a school that is part of the Inspire Teaching School Alliance, to provide training and support for teachers. The headteacher at Hall Meadow is a National Leader of Education.
- The school receives support from a Local Leader of Education at the St Luke multi-academy trust. Plans are in place for the school to become part of the St Luke multi-academy trust, in September 2015.
- The building work to extend classrooms in the early years was completed at Easter.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all pupils, make the progress of which they are capable, particularly in mathematics and writing, by ensuring that all teachers:
  - have high expectations for the most-able pupils
  - make effective use of assessment information to set work that enables all pupils to make good progress
  - consistently apply the school's calculation policy
  - use marking effectively so that pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and attendance by ensuring that:
  - pupils are fully engaged in their learning
  - rates of attendance are consistently above national averages.
- Improve the achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs across all year groups, by:
  - improving the quality of support provided by teaching assistants
  - involving parents and carers effectively in planning their child's special educational needs support.
- Improve provision in the early years by:
  - ensuring that all teaching is consistently good and that children are provided with purposeful learning activities
  - providing greater opportunities for boys and those who speak English as an additional language to improve their literacy skills.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear understanding of how to improve the school further. The headteacher is extremely competent and not afraid to confront issues, including taking immediate action to eradicate inadequate teaching and improve the performance of leaders. All staff express confidence in her leadership. She has re-instilled the school's values and put the children and their families back at the centre of everything that the school does.
- The leadership of teaching is good. The deputy headteacher has a well-rounded view of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Staff training is timely and appropriate. Teachers work together in threes to support each other to improve teaching. As a result, teaching is improving rapidly.
- Arrangements for performance management are effective. Teachers' performance management objectives are highly personalised, and relate closely to the stage that they are in their careers. They are required to meet challenging targets related to school improvement priorities.
- The quality and effectiveness of other leaders is improving rapidly. The headteacher has appropriately delegated a number of her previous responsibilities. All leaders are growing in confidence and are robustly held to account.
- School leaders and governors take their responsibilities for equality very seriously. They have taken positive steps to ensure that no child receives less favourable treatment than another. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and leaders take positive steps to support children and families who are at risk of discrimination.
- Leaders spend the school sports funding appropriately. Leaders have prioritised the need to develop the skills of teachers at the school, to ensure sustainability of sports activities in the future. Most pupils participate in extra-curricular sport.
- School leaders ensure that the pupil premium funding is spent fairly. A specialist teaching assistant ensures that disadvantaged pupils' well-being needs are addressed. Leaders have started to involve parents and carers in financial decisions about their child's additional support. Disadvantaged pupils thrive at this school.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and enables all pupils to take a full part. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. The recent 'day of many colours' allowed all pupils the opportunity to consider the lives of children in underdeveloped countries. There are numerous, well-attended, extra-curricular activities including, for example, 'goal ball', a sport that can be accessed by disabled children and those who have special educational needs.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Members of the school council say that they feel 'listened to' and have been influential in making changes to the school. Pupils have a good knowledge of cultures and beliefs other than their own. They are highly tolerant and respectful of others.
- The coordinator for special educational needs has ensured that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are accurately identified. However, there are insufficient formal meetings with parents and carers to discuss the support needed for their child. The quality of support received by these pupils is variable, although it is steadily improving.
- The local authority continues to provide effective external support. The senior local improvement officer knows the school well and she has provided timely support for subject leaders. The local authority has recently secured funding to provide the school with additional staffing in the summer term.
- School leaders access appropriate support from the local teaching school alliance, Hall Meadow. The National Leader of Education from the alliance has provided effective support to senior managers and the

subject leader for English. School leaders are strengthening their links with the new sponsor, St Luke multi-academy trust. The Local Leader of Education from the trust is providing effective support to subject leaders. The headteacher, as a result of her recent experience, is contributing progressively more to this partnership of schools.

#### ■ The governance of the school:

- Governors know the school well and are aware of its strengths and weaknesses. Governors recognise the importance of spending the pupil premium funding effectively, and have supported the recent drive to involve parents in how this money is spent.
- A sub-committee of the governing body is responsible for monitoring the impact of actions on the school improvement plan and successfully holds school leaders to account for pupils' performance.
- Governors ensure that the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements.
- Governors ensure that teachers' pay relates to performance, and no pay increases were awarded at the beginning of this academic year.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils

### requires improvement

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils' attitudes to learning are not consistently good. This is particularly the case when work in lessons does not cater for pupils' different abilities. When pupils find the work too hard or too easy, they become disengaged with their learning.
- Pupils' overall attendance has dipped recently so that it is now a little below average. Leaders have robust systems in place to check pupils' attendance and make regular contact with their families. However, leaders have not been able to reduce the number of families who take holidays during term-time. Leaders have been successful in reducing the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent.
- There are very few incidents of poor behaviour. Leaders keep extensive behaviour logs and check them for trends. Pupils are very mindful of their school mission statement, which states, 'Always treat others as you would like them to treat you.'
- Pupils' conduct around the school is impressive. They are sensible and are polite to visitors. They take pride in their appearance and their work. They play well together and are considerate to others in the playground.

#### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school's arrangements for safeguarding fully meet statutory requirements.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. Site access is secure and appropriate measures are in place to ensure their safety and well-being.
- Pupils report that bullying is rare and are confident that teachers deal with any incidents effectively. Pupils are well informed about the different types of prejudice-based bullying, including homophobic and cyber-bullying. The playground has posters describing the types of bullying and what pupils should do if it occurs. These posters further reinforce pupils' understanding of this issue.
- Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of risks associated with new technologies. Internet safety awareness is taught to every child at the beginning of each term. There is a comprehensive e-safety policy and parents, pupils and teachers are required to sign an agreement regarding this.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teachers do not always match activities to pupils' individual learning needs or their different abilities. They do not always make best use of the information they have on pupils' prior attainment. On occasion, the

most-able pupils find work too easy and the least-able pupils find it hard to understand. This results in some pupils becoming disengaged.

- The quality of support provided by teaching assistants is variable. Some teaching assistants provide highly effective support and take time to develop pupils' learning. Teaching assistants are less effective when they do too much work for the children and do not use effective questioning. Teaching assistants do not always model correct vocabulary or numerical terms.
- Teachers' marking and assessment of pupils' work are improving, but these vary between subjects and teachers. Most teachers make use of the school's policy to use 'tabs' to indicate to pupils where they need to look at their work again. Pupils say they value the efforts that their teachers go to and are keen to improve their work as a result.
- Teachers are using a wide variety of mathematical resources. Pupils are becoming increasingly confident in using these resources. As a result, their enjoyment and application of mathematics are improving. Although teachers are all expected to apply the school's calculation policy, not all do so – particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Teachers set homework consistently and regularly. Parents value the greater clarity in the expectations for their child's homework. Year 6 pupils have targeted homework and this has helped to accelerate their progress.
- Pupils' literacy skills are improving. Teachers plan for literacy development in every subject and pupils are rewarded for using the 'word of the week'. Pupils' written work is improving as a result.
- Pupils' opinions are collected regularly and their feedback has resulted in changes to the way they work in lessons. Pupils say that when teachers use 'focus, think or talk' time in lessons, it helps them to know when they must focus on their work and it gives them other opportunities to 'develop confidence and learn from each other.'

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils' progress from their starting points varies between subjects and year groups. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should at the end of Year 2, particularly in mathematics. However, pupils in Year 6 are now making the progress expected of them from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most-able pupils do not achieve as well as they should in some subjects. Teachers' expectations of the most-able pupils are sometimes too low. Not enough of the most-able pupils are predicted to achieve a Level 6 in writing at the end of Year 6. Too few of the most-able pupils in Year 2 will attain a Level 3 in mathematics. These pupils will not exceed expected progress from their starting points.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs varies between year groups. In some year groups, they are effectively supported and they are making strong progress. In other year groups – for example, in Year 5 – they do not make sufficient progress.
- Pupils in the current Year 6 are predicted to attain levels in line with, or above national expectations in reading, writing, and mathematics. Leaders introduced a 'girls-only' mathematics session for Years 5 and 6 to help them develop their confidence in this subject. This is having a positive effect on girls' achievement, and the gap between boys and girls has narrowed quickly in this subject.
- The new calculation policy is helping to improve pupils' mathematical understanding. Pupils' misconceptions are addressed regularly and teachers challenge pupils by saying, 'convince me', and 'what do you notice?' to help pupils develop their mathematical reasoning.
- The number of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding in Year 6 is too low to comment on their attainment without risk of identifying individual pupils. However, throughout the school, disadvantaged

pupils make increasingly good progress and so are catching up with classmates where they were previously behind.

- Reading has a high profile across the school. Pupils read enthusiastically. The most-able pupils are confident readers and are becoming increasingly fluent. Pupils who are developing their reading skills benefit from additional vocabulary sheets. In general, books are well matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils' progress in reading is good.
- The proportion of pupils expected to achieve the expected standard in phonics is improving rapidly and pupils in Year 1 are predicted to exceed the national average in 2015. This is a result of a concerted effort to ensure that all staff are appropriately trained in phonics techniques.
- Leaders have ensured that their systems for assessing pupils' progress are increasingly accurate. For example, teachers attend regular 'phase meetings', chaired by a senior leader, where they are required to provide evidence to support their assessments. These are followed up by a pupil progress meeting, where teachers are required to identify children who need additional support.

### The early years provision

### requires improvement

- In 2014, children's learning and development in the early years was too low. Children did not progress sufficiently well from their starting points. They were not well prepared for Year 1. Teachers' assessments for the children currently in Reception show that children's levels of development are improving rapidly and are now typical for their age.
- Some children do not achieve as well as others. Boys and children who speak English as an additional language do not develop as well they could in reading, writing and speaking. Children's progress is strongest in physical development and technology.
- The quality of teaching is variable. Occasionally, children are not clear about the purpose of their learning and teachers do not challenge them sufficiently well. Sometimes, adults provide the children with too much support restricting their ability to discover things for themselves. Where teaching has improved, children benefit from well-planned learning opportunities that meet their individual learning needs. They are keen to join in and eager to learn.
- Leadership is improving rapidly. The new leader has had a notable influence on the quality of overall provision. The new classroom is well resourced and offers children extensive opportunities for structured activities in the outdoor learning space. This is having a marked impact on children's achievement and enjoyment.
- Children are safe and well cared for. Children behave well. They are friendly and respectful to adults and each other.
- Early years staff have developed strong partnerships with parents. There are good arrangements to ensure that children settle in when they start 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	122044
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	462743

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	307
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Eamonn McAuley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Leanne Brydon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 March 2014
<b>Telephone number</b>	01536 202491
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