

Holy Rood Catholic Primary School

Shaw Street, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S70 6JL

Inspection dates 20–21 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils' achievement at the end of Key Stage 1 is not high enough in writing and mathematics.
- In 2014, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 fell. This represented some underachievement, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is not consistently good enough in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' progress is variable across Years 1 to 4, especially for the most-able, because the work set is not always sufficiently challenging.
- Teachers do not build well enough on pupils' knowledge and skills in writing and mathematics in their other subjects. This slows progress.
- Not all teachers check on pupils' understanding in lessons carefully enough before moving on to other planned activities.
- Some teachers do not alter activities in lessons to meet pupils' changing needs.
- Pupils do not always respond to teachers' comments about how to improve their work.
- Leaders and managers have not acted quickly enough to improve the quality of teaching. This has resulted in pupils' progress slowing and the overall effectiveness of the school declining from good to requiring improvement.
- When making judgements about the effectiveness of teaching, senior and middle leaders do not pay enough attention to the understanding and skills that different groups of pupils show in lessons and in their work. This results in an over-generous view of the quality of teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching and learning in the early years provision are good. Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception Years. A larger proportion than nationally achieves a good level of development.
- The behaviour of pupils around school and in most lessons is good. Pupils are proud of their school and are polite and welcoming of visitors.
- School leaders make sure that pupils are safe and secure. Pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is good.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well because of the well-targeted additional support.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a range of interesting experiences and opportunities which enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully.
- There is some good teaching which results in pupils making good progress in some year groups.
- Governors are increasingly confident in holding the school's leaders to account.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a range of lessons, of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Pupils' work was sampled informally in lessons in a wide range of subjects. In addition, writing and mathematics work from pupils in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 was sampled separately by inspectors. Inspectors heard a sample of pupils read.
- Inspectors also reviewed a range of documents, including the school's own data relating to pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, minutes of meetings of the governing body, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents pertaining to safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with pupils in Years 3 to 6, governors and school staff, including those with management responsibilities. A discussion also took place with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors evaluated the 54 responses of parents to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also took account of the views of 10 members of the school's staff through the inspection questionnaires they returned.

Inspection team

Andrew Swallow, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Pamela Hemphill

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, although an increasing proportion is from minority ethnic groups, especially eastern European. A large number of these pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported through the pupil premium funding, is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding to support those known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- Early years provision is made through a part-time Nursery and a full-time Reception class.
- In 2014, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The school receives support from the local education authority, the Diocese of Hallam, external consultants and Holy Trinity School, Barnsley.
- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in staffing. A new Chair of the Governing Body and new governors have been appointed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to consistently good, in order to increase pupils' progress, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - encourage pupils to respond to comments about how to improve their work
 - carefully check on pupils' understanding before moving on to other planned activities in lessons
 - are sufficiently flexible to change the planned activities in lessons to meet pupils' changing needs.
- Increase the proportion of pupils making more than expected progress in writing and mathematics, especially the most-able, by setting harder work including:
 - sharpening pupils' accuracy in spelling more adventurous words, encouraging the use of a wider range of language and punctuation for effect, and building pupils' confidence to express their ideas in increasingly complex sentences and well-thought-out paragraphs
 - providing more challenging problem-solving work in mathematics and developing further the confidence of pupils to explain fully the reasoning that lies behind their answers
 - providing opportunities for all pupils to develop and apply their writing and mathematical skills in all subjects.
- Hone senior and middle leaders' skills in checking on the effectiveness of teaching over time by:
 - paying more attention to how well different groups of pupils acquire knowledge, show understanding, and develop key skills in lessons and in their work
 - improving the rigour with which leaders monitor the achievement and attendance of different groups of pupils.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because senior leaders and governors have not secured consistently good teaching across the school. Checks on the quality of teaching are carried out regularly, but with too little focus on the key priorities to help to drive rapid improvement.
- Middle and senior leaders are keen to carry out their responsibilities. While they check on the work in pupils' books and visit lessons regularly, they are not rigorous enough in making judgements about the quality of teaching. This is because they do not pay sufficient attention to the impact of teaching over time on individual pupils' progress and achievements, particularly in writing and mathematics. Consequently, the development of teaching and actions to improve the overall provision in Key Stage 1 and in lower Key Stage 2 happen at a much slower pace than is needed.
- Senior leaders have an over-generous view of how well the school is doing. Although the school's development plan tackles the correct areas for improvement, identified outcomes often lack sufficient precision or are not ambitious enough, especially in relation to the quality of teaching. This has contributed to a decline in the quality of provision since the previous inspection.
- Leaders have created a positive ethos in which good behaviour can flourish. Pupils in Year 6 are well prepared and supported to take their next steps through well-established arrangements with local secondary schools.
- The headteacher inspires a committed and dedicated team of staff and governors. Teachers are given a high level of autonomy. This sometimes works well. There are some strengths emerging, for example in the work taking place to support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and pupils at an early stage of learning English.
- Key leaders, including governors, communicate increasingly high expectations. Systems for the management of teachers' performance have improved since the beginning of the academic year. They are focused more sharply on holding teachers to account for their work to improve pupils' achievement. Governors are appropriately informed of, and included in, all of this work.
- Assessment data and information are starting to be shared more fully with teachers and across year groups. However, systems for tracking pupils' progress, and the rigour with which leaders monitor the achievement and attendance of different groups of pupils, do not always lead to timely or successful interventions.
- Almost all parents who responded to Parent View would recommend the school to other parents. However, some parents feel that leadership and management are not as good as they should be. Inspectors agree with these comments.
- The curriculum has strengths in the range of activities provided to enhance pupils' learning. Sporting, musical and cultural opportunities, extra-curricular experiences such as photography and cooking, links with a school in Columbia, and a wide range of charity work and fund-raising activities promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- There are missed opportunities to reinforce pupils' writing and mathematics skills in other subjects. Pupils' achievements and work in other subjects are not always checked carefully enough to ensure good progress.
- Good use is made of the primary school sport funding. Pupils enjoy good experiences in physical education and sport. They participate in a wide range of activities, competitive and informal, funded from the primary school sports initiative, which is having a positive impact on pupils' health and well-being
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective and meet requirements. School leaders are adept in identifying any pupils at risk of harm, and engaging with the local children's safeguarding board and other partners to respond appropriately.
- Through the work of the school council, visits from the police and people in positions of authority within the local community, the school promotes the fundamental British values of freedom, law and equality of opportunity well. Well-planned assemblies, circle time and strict observance of The Golden Rules also contribute to this. Staff promote the concept of good relations at all times.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity adequately and there is no evidence of discrimination in any form. Appropriate use of additional government funding has helped to close gaps in the achievements of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other learners successfully.
- The local authority and the Diocese of Hallam know the school well. They provide and commission appropriate support from other schools and consultants to enhance the quality of teaching, the work of the governing body, and to help to moderate the school's own judgements about its overall effectiveness.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Recent changes in governance have established a better balance between the

support and challenge that they provide for the school's leaders.

- The governing body receives increasingly detailed information and data about the school's work, presented in a helpful and accessible way. Consequently, governors have the insights that help them to hold the headteacher and senior leaders increasingly to account for the impact of actions to improve pupils' achievement.
- Steps to commission reviews by external consultants have helped governors to understand how well the school compares with local and national schools on a range of performance indicators.
- Governors have detailed discussions about major spending decisions, in particular the allocation of pupil premium and sports funding. For example, they have authorised additional staffing and resources to support teaching literacy and numeracy in small groups. They have appointed sports coaches to improve the teaching of physical education. Governors plan to check on the impact of these initiatives even more rigorously than they have done in the past.
- Governors have been thorough in the revised arrangements that they have put into place to review the performance of the headteacher annually. They receive appropriate information about the performance targets set for teachers and check potential links with salary progression. They ensure that the headteacher's recommendation that teachers receive financial reward is approved only if pupils reach their challenging targets.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The vast majority enjoy positive relationships with one another and all of the adults. Pupils take the school's Golden Rules seriously and seek to involve everyone, including those who are newly arrived, in all of the school's activities.
- The vast majority of pupils are welcoming to visitors and proud to talk about their school and its values. They enjoy learning about the different cultures and backgrounds that pupils come from, and emphasise how important it is to treat everyone fairly and courteously.
- Pupils are keen to talk about each other's achievements. They are keen to acknowledge their friends' successes on the school's notice board and celebrate them in the special assemblies.
- Pupils take their responsibilities as class representatives on the school council seriously, which demonstrates how these positions help them to contribute to a strong school community.
- Pupils know of the different types of bullying, particularly racist, homophobic and cyber-bullying. Records show that the rare incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with by staff effectively and quickly.
- In lessons, most pupils enjoy working together and support each other well. They embody successfully the school's aim to provide an environment where 'everyone can thrive'. Even when the teaching is not stimulating, many persevere and try their best.
- Staff work hard to make parents more aware of the importance of regular attendance. They are increasingly vigilant about discouraging parents from taking their children on holiday during term time.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. In their responses to the online questionnaire, almost all parents felt that their children were happy and kept safe.
- Outdoors and indoors, pupils work and play sensibly, and are supervised well. On rare occasions, pupils can be unkind and fall out. These disagreements are dealt with by staff quickly and skilfully, and soon forgotten by pupils.
- Training keeps staff up-to-date with child protection and safeguarding procedures. The school's ethos encourages pupils to share their thoughts openly, and to listen to, and value, each other's views and ideas.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school. They are confident that there is always someone with whom they can share a problem. They know about organisations such as Childline and who to contact should they have worries away from school.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe when learning outdoors and during visits. They have a good understanding of the different kinds of bullying and know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and mobile phones.
- Governors visit the school regularly. They carry out safety checks, ensure that pupils are well looked after, and confirm that pupils are well prepared to live in the increasingly diverse and multi-cultural local community.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Not all pupils have had the benefit of good teaching over time. Pupils' progress is variable across Years 1 to 4, especially for the most able, because the work provided for pupils is not always sufficiently challenging. Stronger teaching in other classes helps many pupils to catch up. However, the quality of teaching and its impact on learning remain too variable.
- Typically in lessons, pupils are clear about what they have to do because teachers explain tasks well. Sometimes, pupils are allowed to spend too long on tasks that repeat, rather than extend, their learning. A minority of the most-able pupils do not attain as highly as they should in writing and mathematics by the time they leave school. This is because they are not always set hard enough work.
- In some classes, careful checks are not always made to see whether all pupils understand sufficiently what they are learning before moving on to new activities. At times, planning is not adapted to meet pupils' changing needs and to get the best out of them.
- The teaching of writing is being developed. More opportunities for sustained writing in different scenarios are emerging across many classes. However, not all teachers insist on accurate spelling and grammar or the use of a wide range of language, punctuation and paragraphs for effect.
- Similarly, teachers are developing their teaching of mathematics. Many provide regular opportunities for pupils to practise their times tables and improve their mental arithmetic skills. Not all teachers encourage pupils to justify their answers in lessons or provide sufficient opportunities for all pupils to apply their learning in a range of different contexts.
- Pupils' skills in writing and mathematics are not reinforced well enough in other subjects. This slows pupils' learning and progress.
- Daily guided reading opportunities are encouraging pupils to read more widely. Taking turns to read aloud in small groups, interspersed with discussions about their books, is helping pupils to gain a deeper understanding of plots and to describe characters in more interesting ways in their own stories.
- Relationships with pupils are good in all lessons. The atmosphere is one in which most pupils help and encourage each other spontaneously. The skills of teaching assistants are particularly well developed. They make a difference in supporting individual pupils to succeed.
- Many teachers know their pupils well and plan carefully to meet their pupils' particular needs. As a result, disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those at an early stage of learning English, achieve well.
- Increased opportunities are provided by most teachers for pupils to respond to marking that invites them to improve their initial written work. Not all teachers yet insist that pupils take full advantage of these opportunities to produce their very best work.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- The majority of children join the early years with skills and understanding below those typical for their age. In the early years, they make good progress. A higher proportion of children than seen nationally reaches a good level of development by the time they join Year 1. However, pupils make inconsistent progress as they move through the school due to variations in the quality of teaching.
- Pupils make steady, rather than good, progress historically across Key Stage 1 in writing and mathematics. Work is not always structured well enough to help pupils, particularly the most able, to build on their earlier achievements and to extend their knowledge and skills. As a result, standards were once again below average in 2014, representing underachievement by many pupils. Leaders and managers have been slow to investigate and tackle the reasons for this.
- In the phonics (sounds that letters make) screening check, carried out at the end of Year 1, increasing numbers of pupils reached above the national expectations for six-year-olds in 2014.
- Pupils are taught to read fluently and with expression. They read often in school and at home, and with growing confidence and understanding. As a result, they make good progress and achieve well in reading across the school.
- Too few pupils make good progress in writing and mathematics in lower Key Stage 2.
- In writing, many pupils are not accurate enough in their spelling of less common words and insufficiently ambitious in their choice of language and use of a range of punctuation for effect. They lack confidence in developing more complex sentences and ordering their thoughts in well-conceived paragraphs.
- In mathematics, while pupils are generally secure in completing well-rehearsed calculations, they are less assured in applying their knowledge to solve problems and justifying the reasoning behind some of their answers.

- The progress that pupils make accelerates during upper Key Stage 2 due to the good quality of teaching they receive and additional support provided in the final years of schooling. As a result, many pupils make expected, rather than good progress, by the end of Year 6.
- End of Key Stage 2 standards vary but are broadly average over time. They are higher in reading than in writing and mathematics. Given pupils' generally expected starting points in Year 1, this end of key stage attainment represents no better than expected progress. Achievement, therefore, requires improvement.
- Significant changes in staffing, together with a higher number of pupils joining the school late in Key Stage 2 whose first language was not English, impacted negatively on Key Stage 2 attainment in 2014. While the school met the overall national floor standards, standards especially in writing and mathematics fell to below national averages.
- Over the present academic year, staffing has become more stable and much work has been carried out to improve the overall quality of teaching. The school's information and pupils' work show that pupils' current rates of progress in writing and mathematics are improving. Increasing numbers of Year 6 pupils are working at a level similar to the national average in mathematics and above the national average in writing.
- Not enough of the most-able pupils are challenged to make sufficient progress in writing and mathematics in all classes. Consequently, not enough are on track in Years 2 and 6 to attain the highest results by the end of each key stage.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make generally good progress. Their attainment and progress are tracked carefully by key leaders. Most persevere well to overcome barriers to learning and achieve individual targets.
- Pupils whose first language is not English also make good progress from their starting points when they join the school. Support provided for all of these pupils by teaching assistants, including those who speak languages other than English, is well targeted and successful in helping them to achieve well.
- The attainment and progress of disadvantaged groups in the school are improving. In 2014, disadvantaged pupils were typically five terms behind in their attainment in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6, and three terms behind in writing, compared to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. They were three terms behind their classmates in reading and mathematics, although only just behind in writing. The overall progress made by disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 in 2014 was below others nationally and their classmates, particularly in reading.
- Senior leaders have taken effective action through daily targeted one-to-one activities and small-group work to reduce attainment gaps significantly, and to close them completely in many year groups. Rates of progress made by disadvantaged pupils have similarly improved. They are increasingly approaching those of other pupils nationally and are often in line with their classmates.
- Attainment in art is a strength of the school.

The early years provision

is good

- Children achieve well during their time in the Nursery and Reception classes. They make good progress and most are well prepared for entry to Year 1. A higher proportion than nationally achieves a good level of development, particularly in their personal, social and emotional qualities, and in communication and mathematical skills.
- Well-organised induction procedures on entry to the Reception Year ensure that children settle quickly. These procedures include parental visits to school which help to provide detailed pictures of each child's needs. Early years staff plan experiences and activities that draw carefully on children's interests. As a consequence, all children are stimulated by the daily activities.
- Children from different cultures and heritages play happily together, indoors and outdoors. They display overall positive behaviour and sensitive attitudes to their learning, such as when they learn about the dangers of plastic for creatures in the ocean.
- The quality of teaching is good. Adults constantly ask searching questions, regularly make informal observations, and record strengths and areas for development in each child's 'learning journey'. The 'star group' weekly challenges encourage all children to stretch themselves in their learning by agreeing up to three pieces of additional work to complete.
- The early years provision is led and managed expertly by a knowledgeable member of staff. Teamwork is good and ensures that all children are well cared for and safe at all times.

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	106632
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	461874

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cath Needham
Headteacher	John Gregson
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2010
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