

Archbishop Runcie CofE First School

Christon Road, Gosforth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE3 1US

Inspection dates

4–5 July 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes have declined over time, especially the proportion of pupils reaching the high standards of which they are capable.
- Senior leaders have not done enough to check the quality of teaching over time. Although they track achievement carefully, they have not been sufficiently rigorous in holding staff to account for pupils' progress, which has resulted in declining standards.
- Governors are enthusiastic and committed to bringing about improvements, but have not held leaders stringently to account for pupils' achievement.
- Teaching is variable, particularly in mathematics. Teachers do not plan activities that are sufficiently challenging, so that pupils can make the best possible progress, particularly the most able pupils.
- Subject leaders are developing their skills, but do not routinely evaluate the impact of their work on raising pupils' achievement.
- Plans to improve the work of the school accurately identify what needs to be done, but targets are not specific or ambitious enough to bring about the required improvements.

The school has the following strengths

- Highly effective provision in the early years ensures that children's progress has improved year-on-year and is securely good. Increasing proportions of children are now exceeding the good level of development expected of them by the time they leave the Reception class.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils are proud of their school and are well behaved and well mannered.
- Support received from the diocese has enabled leaders to halt the decline in pupils' outcomes and improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in writing.
- The deputy headteacher has secured accurate and reliable systems for assessing pupils' achievement.
- Parents are very positive about the school. The vast majority would recommend it to others.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sharpen leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - plans to improve the school include precise and ambitious targets to secure improvements in pupils' outcomes, particularly for the most able
 - checks on teaching are undertaken with the required urgency to bring about improvements and feedback to teachers focuses on the impact of teachers' actions to maximise learning
 - subject leaders receive the support needed to take a more strategic view of the impact of their actions on improving pupils' outcomes
 - governors fulfil their statutory duty in holding leaders stringently to account.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in mathematics, by making sure teachers:
 - do all they can to develop pupils' skills of reasoning and problem-solving
 - provide regular opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding and develop their skills in subjects beyond English, so that all groups of pupils, particularly the most able, are challenged to achieve the best they can.
- Improve pupils' achievement so that pupils routinely reach age-related expectations and increasing proportions, particularly of the most-able, achieve the highest possible standards by ensuring that:
 - work set is consistently well-matched to pupils' needs and abilities and challenges them to think hard about their learning
 - opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding and develop their subject-specific skills are increased.

An external review of governance is recommended.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher has ensured that a strong Christian ethos pervades the school; however, she has not been sufficiently robust in holding teachers to account for pupils' outcomes. As a result, leaders' actions were not timely enough to prevent the decline in pupils' outcomes that has occurred over time.
- Leaders have established procedures for staff appraisal. Targets are linked to school priorities, but are not sufficiently focused or ambitious to bring about the improvements required.
- Plans for improving the work of the school identify the correct priorities. However, targets set for improvement are insufficiently challenging or ambitious enough to raise achievement with the speed that leaders desire.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and is taught through a topic-based approach. Although teachers choose topics that interest pupils and use visits to enhance pupils' learning, they are not having the desired impact on raising pupils' achievement. This is because planned curriculum activities do not build on pupils' previous learning well enough, in order to develop pupils' subject-specific skills progressively.
- Intervention by the diocese has been pivotal in halting the decline in standards at the school. They have secured external consultants who have worked with subject leaders to improve their practice. Subject leaders have demonstrated that they can make successful improvements: teaching, learning and assessment of writing have improved as a result of leaders' actions. Disappointingly, this is not yet consistent and in particular the subject leadership of mathematics has failed to bring about the same level of improvement in this subject.
- The special educational needs coordinator is recently appointed and her actions are already improving pupils' outcomes. The identification of pupils' individual needs is now more accurate and is enabling teachers to put specific support in place. Although pupils' attainment is generally below that which is expected, pupils' progress from their starting points is good. This means the additional special educational needs funding is used well to enable pupils to catch up in their learning.
- Leaders have used the additional funding for sports effectively to provide and promote engagement in sport. Pupils access a wide range of sporting activities and competitions. By using part of the funding to employ a specialist teacher, leaders have ensured that teachers are becoming confident in delivering physical education (PE) lessons and pupils' skills have improved. Participation in sport has increased, so that pupils are more active and their fitness improving.
- Leaders promote the fundamental British values well. They ensure that such values feature prominently in assemblies and within the strong Christian ethos that exists within the school.
- There is a small proportion of disadvantaged pupils within school. Although the school's pupil premium strategy document, currently on the school's website, is not compliant with government requirements, governors have a clear understanding of how this additional funding is spent. Additional monies are apportioned to pupils' individual

needs and checks are made that this is effective. While actions are supporting pupils to make progress that is at least typical, too few disadvantaged pupils are able to reach the high standards expected of them.

- Parents speak highly of the school. The vast majority of parents feel that their children are well looked after and kept safe.

Governance of the school

- Governors are highly motivated and committed to the school. They articulate confidently their vision for the future and their determination to raise pupils' achievement. They acknowledge that until very recently they did not hold leaders of the school to account stringently and, as a result, pupils' outcomes declined.
- Recent support from the diocese has empowered governors to begin to undertake their strategic role with greater confidence. This is in its earliest stages, but there is evidence within governing body minutes of the increasing challenge now offered to school leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders, including governors, have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff undertake training to ensure they are fully aware of their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. Induction procedures for new staff include reference to the school's policy and procedures.
- A designated safeguarding governor plays an active role in school, checking procedure and protocol and reporting findings to the wider governing body. Any concerns raised are followed up in a timely manner.
- Leaders ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe, particularly when using the internet. The older pupils say that they feel well prepared for their transition to middle school, the risk that can come from using social media and the dangers associated with online bullying. The pupils spoken to have a secure understanding of what bullying is and are confident that their teachers would sort out any problems should they occur.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching over time has been too variable. Insufficient checks and limited guidance for improvement from leaders have led to a decline in the quality of teaching and learning and subsequently pupils' outcomes.
- Teaching does not consistently challenge the most able pupils. Sometimes, the tasks do not extend skills from previous learning or they are too easy. Occasionally, pupils do not move on to more complex and demanding work quickly enough.
- The teaching of mathematics remains inconsistent across the school. Leaders have rightly identified that pupils' arithmetic skills are secure and more opportunities for pupils to practise and acquire their reasoning and problem-solving skills are required.

However, there is little evidence in pupils' books to indicate that this issue has been addressed successfully. As a result, pupils are not making the progress they are capable of and too few are making the faster progress needed to reach the higher standards.

- Leaders' actions are improving the teaching of writing effectively. Following external consultant support, leaders have developed detailed schemes of work for every year group. This means that work in pupils' books is now demonstrating a secure progression of skills. While this is having a positive impact on the quality of writing in English books, it is yet to be used consistently to develop writing in subjects across the curriculum.
- The teaching of reading is a stronger feature within the school. Pupils in Year 4 demonstrate advanced skills of inference and deduction and are developing a widening vocabulary. Strong phonics teaching in key stage 1 underpins the improved outcomes in reading seen in the school.
- The teaching of other subjects is inconsistent as there are too few pupils, particularly the most able, making the faster progress needed to reach the higher standards of which they are capable. This is because pupils are moved on in their learning too quickly and are not stretched and challenged to think more deeply about their learning.
- Leaders have worked hard to secure the school's approach to assessment. Every pupil's progress is checked each term and an individual target for the end-of-year outcome is used to help leaders monitor progress.
- Teaching assistants provide effective additional support to both individuals and small groups. They relate well to pupils and adjust work accordingly to enable pupils to access the learning alongside their peers. In Year 2, for example, they sensitively supported pupils to sort and classify a groups of animals.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. There is a strong commitment to developing pupils' wider personal and emotional well-being and staff are trained to look out for changes in pupils' behaviour which may be an indicator of stress.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They take pride in their work and are keen to talk about their learning. Work presented in books is generally reflective of this.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of their social responsibilities and are encouraged to look after the world as 'stewards' of God. The school's charitable work provides even the youngest pupils with a growing awareness of their responsibility to look after others. This strong Christian ethos pervades the work of the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strong feature of provision. Pupils experience a raft of visits and visitors to enhance their learning and development. While this is not fully realised in pupils' outcomes, it is broadening the experiences of some pupils and supporting pupils' increasingly sophisticated

understanding of cultural and spiritual awareness.

- Pupils told the inspector that they feel very safe in school and know that their teachers will help them with any concerns. The overwhelming majority of parents who completed the online questionnaire during the inspection endorsed this view.
- Pupils learn about the importance of healthy lifestyles and taking regular exercise. They are encouraged to take part in a range of sporting activities. Participation in sport has increased and pupils enjoy taking part in competitive activities.
- Attendance overall remains above the national average, although current attendance information would indicate there has been a slight decline from previous years. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has also declined. This is attributable to only a small number of pupils. A dedicated parent support adviser is deployed to good effect to improve rates of attendance for some of these pupils. The vast majority of pupils arrive at school on time and are eager to learn.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and well-mannered to each other and to adults.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is and told inspectors that it doesn't really happen here. Older pupils know about the dangers of online bullying and say they feel well prepared for their transfer to middle school next academic year.
- Playtimes are harmonious events, with all pupils engaged in purposeful play. The extensive grounds allow for pupils to play freely and imaginatively in their games or practise their sporting skills. Transitions between the classroom and playground are smooth and orderly.
- Pupils generally show good attitudes to their learning and are respectful to each other and to staff. However, pupils are not always actively involved in their learning, particularly when curriculum activities are not as engaging for them. At these times, pupils are quiet and compliant, but not fully involved in learning.
- Any incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with in a sensitive way and considerate of pupils' needs. Exclusions are rare.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over time, pupils' outcomes have declined, particularly in writing and mathematics, with fewer pupils reaching the higher standards of achievement than was previously the case. Actions taken by leaders have halted this decline. For the pupils currently in the school, outcomes have stabilised and are showing signs of improvement in writing. This is not the case in mathematics.
- Outcomes in mathematics are at the expected standard because pupils have secure arithmetic skills and are competent in using number facts. Pupils' skills of reasoning and problem-solving are less secure, because they receive too few opportunities to practise them.

- The most able pupils have not made the progress of which they are capable, with fewer than should be the case reaching the high standards expected of them. This is because pupils are not sufficiently or consistently challenged to think hard about their learning in a range of subjects.
- Outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are improving. Although attainment is below that which is expected, pupils are making no less than typical progress and often good progress from their starting points. This is because provision is adapted to meet pupils' needs and the support provided by teaching assistants is focused and effective.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils is variable. This is in some way due to the small proportions of pupils within each cohort. Although leaders track these pupils' progress carefully and set targets for improvement according to pupils' starting points, few disadvantaged pupils reach the higher standards or make strong progress. Leaders have recently identified an 'aspire' group of pupils, which identifies those pupils who are able to reach the higher standards. It has only just been introduced, and it is too early to determine the impact of this measure.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years leader has considerable knowledge, wide-ranging skills and a deep understanding of how young children learn. As a result, children in the early years thrive, particularly in the Reception class.
- Children's outcomes have improved year-on-year, and in 2016 the proportion reaching a good level of development at the end of the Reception class was above the national average. The school's most recent assessment information would suggest that this will have dipped slightly overall, but almost half of the cohort are expected to exceed this. This represents good progress from children's starting points, which are broadly typical.
- The Reception classroom is vibrant, exciting and well resourced. Children working inside the classroom and those working outdoors are engrossed in their learning. This is because curriculum activities are planned to meet children's needs and interests. For example, Alexa, the class puppet, was used to good effect, with pupils writing signs and making maps to help her find her way through 'Troll Wood'.
- The teaching of phonics is strong. The teaching sequence is well structured and promotes children's early reading and early writing skills effectively. This means that children are confident in their attempts to read more demanding texts and to commit their ideas for writing to paper. Children are well placed for the next stage of their education.
- Outdoor learning is equally well resourced and provides opportunities for children to make connections with their learning, to explore and to investigate. For example, children in Nursery went outside full of enthusiasm to make a bug hotel, linking with their topic on minibeasts.
- Learning journals are detailed and the teachers' commentaries capture accurately the seminal moments of every child's achievements throughout the year. The next steps in learning are accurately identified and children's own commentary supplements them. Although overall the quality is good, there are inconsistencies between those seen in

the Reception class, which are particularly strong, compared with those from the Nursery class.

- While provision in the early years is good overall, there are marked differences between the provision in the Reception class compared with that in the Nursery class. Curriculum activities are planned around a theme in the Nursery, designed to engage young children and encourage them to be curious and to want to find things out. However, staff interventions are not as timely as they could be to ensure that children's learning is moved on quickly and questioning is insufficiently probing in order to make children think about their learning. This means that, although children in the Nursery class make typical progress from their starting points, fewer children are able to make the faster progress needed to exceed the expected standard.

School details

Unique reference number	108495
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10035909

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	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Hawkins
Headteacher	Julie Robson
Telephone number	01912 852663
Website	www.archbishop-runcie.eschools.co.uk
Email address	admin@archbishop.newcastle.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 January 2012

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information, regarding the school's use of the pupil premium grant, on its website.
- The headteacher is due to retire at the end of the academic year. Governors have appointed a new headteacher for September 2017.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The number of pupils who are disadvantaged and known to be eligible for the pupil premium grant are below the national average for primary schools.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British background. More recently, there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion of pupils supported by a statement of special educational

needs or an education, health and care plan.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in each class. All of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- A wide range of pupils' books, school assessment information, leaders' evaluation of teaching and learning and a range of school documents were looked at during the inspection.
- Meetings were held with the director of education for the diocese and deputy director of education for the diocese, six members of the governing body (including the chair of governors) and subject leaders. A telephone conversation was held with the local authority's school improvement partner for the school.
- Pupils were spoken to informally in class and during playtime and lunchtime. A number of pupils were heard to read from key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- The school's website, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding documents were scrutinised.
- The responses from the 82 parents who completed the inspection questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account.

Inspection team

Diane Buckle, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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