

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Edlington

Bungalow Road, Edlington, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN12 1DL

Inspection dates

20–21 February 2018

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Standards in English and mathematics have declined since the last inspection. Leaders are addressing the legacy of underachievement but their actions are not resulting in consistently good outcomes across the school.
- There has been considerable staffing turbulence. Every leader and teacher has taken up post within the last two years, and many of them in recent months. This has slowed the rate of progress which leaders have been able to secure.
- The quality of teaching, while improving, is too variable. Not all pupils receive the challenge and support they need to help them make the necessary gains in their learning.
- Subject leadership is underdeveloped. Subject leaders are new to post and have, therefore, had limited impact on improving standards in their areas of responsibility.
- Leadership of provision for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is only just beginning to increase the impact of the support pupils receive.
- Despite improvements in the early years, there are missed opportunities for children to develop their early reading, writing and mathematics skills throughout the school day.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have a firm understanding of the school's priorities for development.
- The headteacher is developing a new staff team who shares his commitment to improving pupils' outcomes.
- The school is improving after a period of significant change. Inadequate teaching has been eliminated.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Leaders have ensured that the school is a safe, calm and welcoming place in which to learn. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive and attendance has improved dramatically this school year.
- Leaders have created a vigilant safeguarding culture.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure consistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils' attainment and progress rapidly improve by ensuring that:
 - accurate assessment information is used to plan learning that is sufficiently challenging and is well matched to pupils' stages of development
 - pupils who need to catch up receive appropriate support
 - adults swiftly address pupils' mistakes and misconceptions during lessons
 - pupils have regular opportunities to develop subject-specific skills in subjects beyond English and mathematics
 - the books which pupils read in the early stages of reading are closely matched to their phonics knowledge.
- Improve progress so that a greater proportion of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, reach and exceed the expectations at the end of each key stage in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and governance by:
 - involving a wider range of subject leaders in rigorously addressing inconsistencies in teaching and learning and raising standards in their areas of responsibility
 - developing consistent systems that enable leaders to routinely evaluate, and share with governors, the impact of their actions on pupils' achievement
 - setting specific targets for groups and cohorts of pupils, with clearly identified measures of success, to help gauge the impact of school improvement action and speed up the rate of pupils' progress
 - continuing to improve the accuracy of assessment of English and mathematics and further developing assessment of pupils' performance in other subjects
 - making more effective use of additional funding to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Sustain the recent improvement in pupils' attendance so that it is at least in line with the national average, both overall and for disadvantaged pupils.
- Ensure that opportunities are maximised for children in the early years to practise their reading, writing and mathematics skills so that a greater proportion of them reach a good level of development by the end of Reception.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The urgency with which leaders have responded to declining standards since the last inspection has been hindered by the changes in leadership and the high turnover of staff. However, the appointment of a headteacher in 2016 and, more recently, an assistant headteacher in September 2017 has meant that actions are now beginning to gather pace.
- The headteacher is ambitious for the pupils. He is also realistic about the task ahead in terms of improving outcomes for pupils at a rapid pace now that staffing has become more stable. Due to the honesty in the headteacher's self-evaluation, appropriate support has been sought from external sources to ensure that the school is able to build the necessary leadership capacity. However, as most leaders are very new to post, they are only just beginning to make checks on the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility. Likewise, they have not established consistent ways of evaluating the impact of their actions. This has meant that their capacity to improve pupils' achievement has been limited.
- The school's improvement plan sets out clearly the priorities and actions to enable the necessary improvement. However, the absence of success criteria which relate precisely to pupils' outcomes limits the governors' ability to hold school leaders more rigorously to account for the progress made by groups and cohorts of pupils.
- Leaders, with the help of external support, have made sure that a more consistent structure for teaching and learning is beginning to take shape. This has contributed to improvements in pupils' progress. Leaders have eradicated inadequate teaching. However, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not securely good throughout the school.
- Having identified that teachers' assessment of pupils' learning was not reliable or accurate enough, the headteacher quickly introduced a new assessment system. This is beginning to support staff in making increasingly accurate assessments of pupils' attainment and progress. However, assessment of subjects other than English and mathematics has not been developed. Therefore, the impact of subject leaders' actions to improve standards across the curriculum has been minimal.
- The impact of funding to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is only just beginning to be evaluated by leaders. Therefore, its effect has been restricted.
- The headteacher has been committed to establishing a team of leaders and teachers who have high expectations of pupils. Underpinning this has been a more thorough approach to holding staff to account for pupils' progress through improved performance management and regular checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result of the headteacher's vision, there is a shared commitment to improving outcomes for pupils and providing them with a range of opportunities to broaden their experiences.
- Leaders have prioritised pupils' reading as an area for development. The importance placed on reading is evident in the timetabling of reading and phonics teaching, which

happens first thing every morning. The addition of a new library at the heart of the school is helping to develop pupils' enthusiasm for and interest in reading widely and often.

- Leaders are committed to inspiring pupils through the curriculum and making sure that it raises their aspirations for the future. This has begun with more regular access to a range of subjects which are linked together in meaningful ways. For example, when pupils in Year 6 visited Whitby on a residential visit, they used the experience of being away from home to imagine how it felt to be evacuated during the Second World War.

Governance of the school

- The governors are relatively new to post and have used an external review of governance to support them in being as effective as they can as quickly as possible. They have arranged for monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment to be quality-assured and externally validated by a range of sources, for example the local authority, partner schools and external consultants. Consequently, governors now have a more accurate understanding of the school's current position.
- Governors are not afraid to challenge the school's leaders to ensure that improvements are realised. For example, following their challenge about the impact of pupil premium spending on disadvantaged pupils' outcomes, the governors arranged for an external review to help the school identify how the funding could be used more effectively.
- The headteacher ensures that governors are accurately informed about the work of the school in general. However, other leaders, such as those responsible for provision and outcomes in subjects, do not provide governors with information about their specific areas of responsibility. This prevents governors from holding leaders to account with even greater rigour.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and governors have put rigorous systems in place for safeguarding pupils. These are understood and carried out diligently by staff. Regular training supports staff in being alert to the possible warning signs of abuse that pupils may present. Staff report concerns promptly and the designated safeguarding leader acts swiftly.
- Leaders have ensured that keeping pupils safe is threaded through all aspects of the school's work. The very strong culture of safeguarding that is evident in the school ensures that pupils feel safe and secure and are in a good position to learn.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning is improving and inadequate teaching has been eradicated. The new teaching team is developing greater consistency but this varies between classes and, therefore, teaching is not securely good.
- Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is becoming more accurate. However, in lessons, teachers do not always check pupils' understanding and errors and

misconceptions go unnoticed and so progress slows. Some teachers, however, address issues throughout lessons and this helps pupils to make faster progress.

- Not all teachers make precise enough use of assessment information to make sure that learning is challenging enough for all pupils. Similarly, some pupils attempt work which is appropriate for their age but does not take account of previous gaps in their learning. In contrast, some teachers plan units of work which provide the right balance of challenge and support for pupils and so these pupils make good progress.
- Phonics is prioritised by leaders and is taught each day. Teachers make regular assessments of pupils' phonics knowledge so that teaching can be targeted to meet the needs of pupils who are at different stages of learning. However, teaching assistants do not always use the agreed approaches as effectively as they should. This results in some missed opportunities to check pupils' understanding and provide appropriate support. Hence, learning time is lost.
- A new approach to the teaching of mathematics is in the early stages of development and is beginning to create more consistency in the teaching methods used.
- Leaders and teachers have created individual profiles for disadvantaged pupils. This has raised the awareness of all staff of how to meet each individual's needs and is resulting in better progress for this group.
- Teaching across the wider curriculum beyond English and mathematics is often used to give a context and purpose to pupils' writing tasks. At present, there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop subject-specific skills in the range of subjects.
- Teachers give pupils increased opportunities to read across the curriculum. This is helping them to develop a wider vocabulary and is sparking their interest in understanding the world around them.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' presentation. Pupils have regular opportunities to produce final pieces of writing using their neatest handwriting. These are proudly displayed in books and around the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Staff create a nurturing atmosphere in school because they have a shared desire to make sure that pupils' well-being is paramount. Consequently, relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. As a result of the care which pupils receive from staff, pupils develop into polite, considerate and well-mannered individuals.
- Pupils feel safe and know who to speak to if they have any concerns. They value the class 'worry boxes' which are a means of anonymously sharing any worry which may arise. Pupils know how to stay safe from bullying and are able to talk with confidence about the strategies they use to stay safe online.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured. They talk with pride about their school and strongly value opportunities to take on board responsibilities, for example through the school council's fundraising efforts and reading with younger pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils conduct themselves very sensibly, without the need for adult instruction, as they move around the school building throughout the school day. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and they exhibit pride and care in their learning.
- A new approach to behaviour management is successful in encouraging positive behaviour. Consequently, the number of incidents of inappropriate behaviour is minimal and reducing.
- In 2016/17, attendance was well below the national average for pupils overall and for disadvantaged pupils. However, as a result of leaders' actions, attendance has improved dramatically this year. Additionally, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has also reduced. Currently, attendance, including for disadvantaged pupils, is close to the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Inconsistent teaching over time means that progress has not been rapid enough to enable pupils to reach the standards expected for their age. Progress has improved recently but not enough to ensure that pupils catch up quickly from previous underachievement. Standards were below the national average in almost every subject and at all key stages in 2017. Consequently, not enough pupils at the end of 2017 were well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The proportion of pupils who met the standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was below the national average in 2016 and 2017. As a result of leaders' actions to address this, current pupils are accessing more frequent phonics teaching and they are making stronger progress than that seen in previous years. However, reading books do not always match closely with each pupil's phonics knowledge. This prevents some pupils, particularly those who are struggling, from quickly developing fluency and confidence in their reading.
- The school's assessment information and work in books demonstrate that pupils are beginning to make stronger gains in their reading, writing and mathematics. An increasing proportion of current pupils are working at age-related expectations.
- Although disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress, their progress is not as strong as that of their peers. Therefore, the difference between their attainment and that of other pupils is not diminishing quickly enough. The school's assessment information confirms that their attainment remains low in almost every year group and subject.
- The leader of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has begun to identify and plan the right support for pupils. However, there is limited impact so far on the progress this group of pupils is making.
- Pupils are developing a love of reading. Year 6 pupils were able to explain confidently why reading is so important and how teachers encourage them to read books which are appropriately challenging so they can expand their vocabulary. Pupils talk with fondness about the books which teachers have read to them.

- Most pupils take pride in their work. There are examples of high standards of presentation and handwriting in pupils' work on display in corridors and classrooms.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the early years was below the national average in 2016 and 2017. Not enough boys secured their learning in reading, writing and mathematics to prepare them sufficiently for their education in key stage 1.
- Leaders are not clear enough about the progress made by different groups of children, for example boys or those who are disadvantaged. This means that it is difficult for leaders to evaluate the impact of their actions to improve achievement for these groups of children.
- The early years leader has a thorough understanding of each individual child's stage of development and their next steps for learning. At various points throughout the day, adults use this information to provide carefully tailored teaching which is targeted at children's next steps. This is resulting in children making better progress in Reception this year. However, the quality of teaching in Nursery has not been as consistent and progress remains slow.
- Adults within the early years unit are not consistent in their approach to the teaching of phonics. This has been affected by changes in staffing. Additionally, there are not enough opportunities for children to practise the phonics skills they are learning at other times throughout the school day.
- The early years leader has made improvements to the learning environment for children. She has ensured that resources are labelled clearly and that systems and routines support children in being able to access learning opportunities more independently. However, when children are working independently, adults miss opportunities to encourage them to practise their newly developing reading, writing and mathematics skills. This means that their progress is not as fast as it could be.
- Leaders have introduced a range of means for parents and carers to be involved in their children's learning. For example, parents are encouraged to come into the classroom at the start of the day and take part in the activities which are set up. This creates a positive start to the day and, consequently, children settle well and parents are aware of the expectations for children's learning.
- Staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. They ensure that children are well cared for and that the legal welfare requirements are met. Relationships between adults and children are strong and, as a result, children feel secure and gain in confidence.

School details

Unique reference number	106773
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10042190

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Kieran Fletcher
Headteacher	Mr Chris Bratt
Telephone number	01709 863 280
Website	www.st-marys-pri.doncaster.sch.uk/
Email address	admin@smcps.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 January 2014

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to staffing and leadership. All of the teachers and leaders are new to the school since 2016. The current headteacher began his substantive post in September 2016. Following a period of long-term staffing absences which left the school with diminished capacity in leadership, a new staffing and leadership structure is now almost complete. An assistant headteacher was appointed in September 2017.
- The school has received extensive support and training brokered by the local authority and the diocese. This has included support from local leaders of education, specialist leaders of education and a link with a partner school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is just below

average.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is just above the national average. However, the proportion who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- In 2016/17, the school met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning throughout the school. Some observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors listened to pupils read. They talked to pupils to glean their views about their school. An inspector visited the breakfast club before the start of the school day.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, assistant headteacher and other leaders. They met with two representatives from the governing body, including the chair of governors. Meetings were also held with representatives from the diocese and the local authority.
- Discussions took place with a group of teachers about the support and development they receive.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work in books, along with the school's information on pupils' achievement, to ascertain the progress that they are making.
- A range of documentation was considered, including the school's self-evaluation, records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, the school improvement plan, information relating to the attendance and behaviour of pupils, safeguarding and child protection records and minutes from governing body meetings. Documents outlining the arrangements for the use of pupil premium funding were also considered.
- An inspector spoke to parents informally at the start of the school day in order to seek their views about the school. Inspectors also took account of the 12 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The 10 responses to the staff questionnaire and the three responses to the pupil questionnaire were taken into account.

Inspection team

Kirsty Godfrey, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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