

St Alban's Catholic Primary School

Wadworth Street, Denaby Main, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN12 4AQ

Inspection dates

11–12 April 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

- High levels of staff change have adversely affected leaders' efforts to bring about consistently good teaching. As a result, many pupils have gaps in their knowledge.
- Pupils do not make consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils do not reach the standards that they are capable of by the end of Year 6.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is not secure in mathematics. There are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in problem-solving and reasoning. This prevents pupils, particularly the most able, from achieving as well as they should.
- Boys do not achieve as well as girls in reading and writing, and disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as others nationally. Boys' progress is not monitored carefully enough.
- Some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Pupils are not consistently set work which is matched well enough to their learning needs, and basic errors in writing and mathematics are not always corrected.
- Assessment in the early years is not precise enough to monitor progress accurately. Not enough children, particularly boys, reach a good level of development, which means that they are not well prepared for Year 1.
- Subject leaders do not evaluate pupils' progress thoroughly enough in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Governors now understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well. However, over time they have not held leaders fully to account for the school's performance, and improvement plans have not been implemented in a timely manner.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and senior leaders are relentless in driving improvements. The school is a very caring and happy place. Pupils are proud of their school and feel safe.
- The teaching of phonics is very effective. The proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standards in the Year 1 phonics screening check is well above the national average.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and those who have challenging behaviour are well supported and make good progress.
- There is some strong teaching practice in key stage 2, where teachers plan to meet pupils' needs and challenge them to achieve at the highest possible standards.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and reach higher standards by ensuring that:
 - teachers have higher expectations of pupils and provide work which appropriately challenges them, particularly the most able
 - pupils are given more opportunities to identify and correct errors in their writing and mathematics
 - pupils have more opportunities to gain a deeper understanding of mathematics and to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills
 - teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is strengthened to ensure that they are confident in challenging pupils to improve, particularly the most able
 - staff improve the teaching of writing to enable pupils to improve their spelling, letter formation and handwriting in key stage 1.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - actions accelerate the progress of boys to diminish further the differences between their attainment and that of girls, particularly in reading and writing
 - disadvantaged pupils make faster progress towards reaching similar standards as other pupils nationally, particularly in writing and mathematics
 - all subject leaders take greater responsibility for driving improvements and raising standards across the curriculum.
- Improve outcomes for children in early years by ensuring that:
 - leaders undertake a review of the strengths and weaknesses of provision to rapidly improve children's progress
 - observations of children's development are sufficiently detailed to inform the regular and accurate assessment of children's learning
 - children's learning activities are more closely matched to their abilities and interests, particularly those of boys
 - individual plans for children focus closely on quickly improving their skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The school has experienced some significant changes since the last inspection. This includes a considerable number of changes in staffing and governance. Over time, this has adversely affected leaders' endeavours to bring about consistently good teaching.
- Over time, these changes have resulted in a decline in the quality of teaching and learning, and especially pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2. Until recently, governors did not hold leaders fully to account for the school's performance, and plans to address weak teaching were not implemented in a timely manner, resulting in pupils falling behind and not making the progress they should.
- The curriculum is rich and interesting. Subject leaders are enthusiastic and provide interesting opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and skills through themes across the curriculum. Pupils enjoy creating stimulating models and displays based on their class texts. In science, pupils demonstrate effective use of information technology in their reports on tsunamis and earthquakes.
- Leaders of English and mathematics have a secure evaluation of their subjects, because pupils' progress is tracked with rigour. However, leaders of other subjects do not track the progress that pupils make across the curriculum rigorously and are unable to evidence that pupils make good progress. Consequently, leaders do not have a secure evaluation of the standard of pupils' work for the subjects they lead.
- Leaders' use of pupil premium funding is ensuring that eligible pupils are now starting to catch up. Over time, though, this has taken too long and the attainment of some pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is still too low. In other ways, vulnerable pupils' emotional and mental health is well supported.
- School life and timetabled subjects contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Spiritual development is closely linked to the Christian ethos in the school. Different cultures and faiths are valued. Pupils benefit from interesting opportunities to learn about British values and democracy by voting for the school council. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the range of extra-curricular activities, including sports, drama and dance clubs.
- The school's leadership for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, particularly for those pupils who have more complex needs, is very effective. The leader is knowledgeable and committed to providing strong specialist support. The school has increased staffing in all classes every morning to provide more opportunities for teachers to track each pupil's progress carefully.
- The physical education and sport premium is used appropriately to increase the level of physical activity for pupils and to improve their well-being. Pupils engage in competitive events. The funding is used to provide training opportunities for staff and extend the range of sporting equipment available for pupils.
- The headteacher and senior leaders are ambitious and committed to driving school improvements. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The right priorities are identified in the school improvement plan and they recognise where more rapid improvements need to be made. Leaders' recent

decision to re-organise classes into small, single-year groups is proving to be successful. The local authority is currently giving the school a high level of support to drive improvement. This is appreciated by school leaders.

- Leaders and governors ensure that keeping pupils safe has a high priority in the school; they have developed a strong culture of safeguarding.

Governance of the school

- Over time, governors did not ensure that a good standard of education was maintained after the previous inspection. They permitted standards to fall, and these have yet to recover. Scrutiny of governing body meetings reveal limited discussions about the progress of groups of pupils and, until recently, too little challenge of leaders to rapidly improve the work of the school.
- The newly appointed chair and vice-chair of governors have quickly established an accurate view of the school's work. They know the school's strengths and where and what improvements are needed.
- Governors' plans focus sharply on improving progress for disadvantaged pupils and monitoring how well these pupils are catching up with their peers. However, there is insufficient focus on improving the progress of boys throughout the school.
- Governors are very supportive of the school and committed to its success. They are generous with their time and with offering practical help. They visit frequently and are in close contact with staff and leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a clear ethos across the school that sets the safety of pupils as a high priority. Leaders have been effective in creating a culture in which safeguarding is seen as everyone's responsibility and not just the designated safeguarding leader. Effective record-keeping reflects the school's commitment to keep all pupils safe. Parents and carers say their children are well cared for and safe at school.
- Training for staff and governors in child protection means that they are knowledgeable and up to date with the most recent guidance and legislation. Staff are vigilant and know what to do should they have any concerns about a child's welfare. The school works very well with parents and a wide range of external agencies to keep children safe and free from harm. Leaders are tenacious in making sure that safeguarding matters are followed up thoroughly. Governors make sure that all checks on staff and volunteers working with children are made and recorded.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching over time have resulted in some pupils making less progress than they should, particularly boys and those who are disadvantaged. Teachers are having to compensate for previous ineffective teaching which has led to gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, some

pupils do not have quick recall of number facts, which holds them back in their fluency in completing mathematical calculations.

- Teachers do not use their knowledge of prior learning or end-of-year expectations to plan effectively for all pupils, particularly in mathematics. Pupils' books show that some teachers regularly give all pupils the same work to complete, regardless of their ability. As a consequence, pupils are not challenged and sometimes find work too easy or too difficult.
- Although leaders have provided training in the new mathematics curriculum, staff still lack confidence and do not always identify inaccuracies in pupils' work. As a result, pupils do not have regular opportunities to develop and apply their problem-solving and reasoning skills to deepen their understanding of key concepts and skills.
- Writing has not always been taught effectively across the school, and, while there are examples of this improving rapidly, there is variation across classes, particularly in pupils' spelling, letter formation and handwriting in key stage 1. Pupils enjoy opportunities to select and display their best 'white gold' writing. However, writing tasks do not always enable pupils to write imaginatively and independently, and errors are not always corrected quickly.
- The teaching of phonics is strong and pupils reach high standards in the phonics screening check. Pupils say that they enjoy reading both at home and at school. Many pupils are confident and fluent when discussing what they are reading.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is improving significantly since the appointment of new teachers, including many who are new to teaching. Timely interventions are effectively implemented and support targeted pupils well to prevent them from falling further behind.
- When teachers have high expectations and create a learning environment where pupils experience many types of spoken and written language, progress is more rapid. Leaders and managers identified that too many boys were not reading at home so they introduced more stimulating class novels such as 'The Hobbit' and 'Holes' in Year 6. There is now a much stronger reading culture in school and among boys.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and relationships are strong. As a result, most pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They apply themselves well in their lessons to all that is asked of them and they concentrate well. Pupils enjoy initiatives such as 'quiz, quiz, trade', which tests their classmates' understanding of a variety of mathematics topics and is helping to raise standards.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The senior leadership team has created a warm and inclusive school. Pupils' achievements are celebrated through 'Alban' token rewards, open days and high-quality displays. The relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are

respectful and positive. This nurturing environment helps pupils to feel safe. The vast majority of pupils say that their teachers help them to look after their emotional health. Pupils enjoy school, and staff morale is very positive.

- Parents said that their children are happy and enjoy coming to school. Pupils said that bullying and bad behaviour are rare. They are confident that staff will take good care of them. Staff reported that behaviour is well managed and that the school is calm and orderly.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to develop their understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Older pupils take on additional responsibilities and are encouraged to be role models of good behaviour for younger children in the school.
- Not all pupils feel that they have enough challenge in their lessons. Many pupils feel that teachers understand what they can do and have high expectations of their work. However, this is not the case for all pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' good manners, considerate attitudes and respect for each other are indicative of the school's ethos.
- In lessons, older pupils are thoughtful and mature in discussions with their classmates and they make respectful comments about each other's work. On occasion, when teaching is not well matched to their needs, some pupils, particularly in key stage 1, lose concentration and fidget or call out, inhibiting their own rapid progress and that of others.
- Attendance is improving and currently is just below the national average. Leaders and managers have used a multitude of strategies to further improve attendance to good effect. However, there remain a small core of pupils who are persistently absent from school. This is partly because of some significant and unavoidable periods of absence for these pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Children's skills and understanding, when they enter the school, are below those typical for their age. They do not make fast enough progress throughout key stage 1 and key stage 2 to catch up. Disadvantaged pupils make slower progress than other pupils nationally, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- In 2016 and 2017, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics combined, at the end of key stage 2, was considerably lower than the national average, particularly for boys. This did not represent good progress from pupils' previous starting points. Pupils made far slower progress in reading in 2016, although there was improvement in reading in 2017. Boys' progress remained below that of other pupils nationally, particularly in writing.
- Currently, younger pupils apply their phonics skills effectively to read and write unfamiliar words. Pupils in upper key stage 2, however, did not develop their early

reading skills securely and many still encounter difficulties with the use and understanding of complex vocabulary.

- The most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to reach the higher standards. In key stage 1, the proportion of pupils reaching a greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average in 2016 and declined further in 2017. With the exception of girls in writing, fewer pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, reach the higher standards than nationally in all subjects.
- Pupils' writing in key stage 1 remains below the expected standard and, currently, they are making slow progress to improve.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standards in reading at the end of key stage 2 was similar to the national average. This is because the attainment of girls improved rapidly and they made much faster progress than boys.
- Despite a higher than average proportion of girls reaching the highest standard in writing in 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard declined to below the national average at key stage 2.
- Outcomes in mathematics also declined for boys and disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 2 in 2017. At key stage 1, it was similar to other pupils nationally in writing and mathematics.
- Work in pupils' books, observations of learning and the school's target-setting information show that expectations of pupils are not always high enough and this slows pupils' progress, particularly for most-able pupils.
- Although the gaps are narrowing, the most recent assessment of pupils' progress demonstrates that girls continue to outperform boys in most classes. The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils are variable across classes.
- Phonics teaching is consistently effective and the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standards in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been above the national average since 2015 for all groups of pupils.
- Recent strategies are improving the quality of teaching, and more pupils, particularly in upper key stage 2, are making faster progress than in previous years. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported, both in lessons and in smaller-group provision. They make good progress.
- Leaders are closely tracking pupils' progress and expect outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics to continue to improve. However, it is too soon to evaluate the impact of these strategies on pupils' progress.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Significant changes in the leadership and staffing in early years has led to children, making slow progress over time. Previous inaccuracies in the assessment of children's achievements have resulted in a decline in the proportion of children who reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. This remains below average. In particular, too few boys reach the standards of which they are capable, which holds them back as they embark on, and go through, key stage 1.

- Teachers and teaching assistants do not record their observations of children's learning in enough detail. As in the rest of the school, staff do not plan learning for children that matches their abilities or interests well enough. Where this is the case, children, particularly boys, do not make the rapid progress that they should.
- Individual plans for children to help them catch up are not used effectively in daily lessons. As a result, some children are not gaining essential reading, writing and mathematics building blocks for the future quickly enough.
- The current early years leader is developing a clearer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. However, the absence of a specific development plan prevents leaders from targeting the most important priorities to improve outcomes for children in the Reception class.
- The learning environment is lively, colourful and inviting, both indoors and outside. This captures the children's imagination and makes them willing learners. The early years is well resourced, with appropriate areas to support the children's learning and development; for example, there is a reading area and construction, small-world, writing and role-play areas. However, the areas are not tailored well enough in support of individual needs or to meet current school improvement priorities. For example, the small-world area is well resourced but is not used imaginatively to progress children's learning, particularly that of boys. As a result, children do not make strong enough progress through their own independent use of the environment.
- Parents endorse the welcome and support of the early years staff, who exude warmth and care for the children. Strong transition and induction arrangements to school mean that children settle quickly into well-established routines. As a result, the children develop key personal, social and emotional skills and qualities, including confidence and independence to play and work together.
- Adults promote good relationships with the children. They interact meaningfully to help guide play or lead directed sessions, for example in mathematics. For example, some children were being well supported to double and halve numbers and demonstrate their understanding by producing dominoes for themselves.
- The teaching of phonics in the early years is effective. This enables the children to make strong progress in their letters and sounds to read and write simple words. This is supporting their development of early reading skills well.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff comply with regulations, for example on paediatric first aid training, and ensure that systems to care for children are appropriately in place.
- Recent improvements in early years are leading to a greater proportion of children making faster progress than in previous years and children are being prepared better to start Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	106771
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10047619

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Cape
Headteacher	Jo Ayres
Telephone number	01709862298
Website	http://www.st-albans.doncaster.sch.uk
Email address	admin@st-albans.doncaster.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A large majority of pupils come from a White British background.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above that seen nationally. An above-average proportion of these pupils have an education, health and care plan.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors undertook a series of short, focused visits to classrooms and longer lesson observations in each class. A number of these were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Formal and informal discussions took place with senior leaders, including governors, subject leaders, pupils, parents and two representatives from the local authority.
- Documentation relating to the school's website and safeguarding, including the record of recruitment checks, was scrutinised.
- The school's self-evaluation, plans for improvement and analysis of current pupils' attainment and progress were evaluated.
- Inspectors, together with senior and middle leaders, scrutinised pupils' work in different subjects.
- Inspectors listened to several pupils read individually.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed by inspectors in lessons and during break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors considered the 11 parent responses to Ofsted's free-text service and the 18 parental responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View. Inspectors spoke with parents and considered the school's own surveys of parents' views. Inspectors also took account of the responses to questionnaires from 17 members of staff and 60 pupils.

Inspection team

Cathy Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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