

The Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School

Kingsland Gardens, Kingsthorpe, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN2 7BH

Inspection dates

16–17 October 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	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and those responsible for governance have not taken effective action to prevent a decline in standards over time.
- Until recently, those responsible for governance did not have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced. Work is ongoing to ensure that leadership is in place for all subjects.
- Leaders have not ensured that the school’s website meets statutory requirements.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not good throughout the school.
- Teachers do not consistently set work that is well matched to pupils’ abilities.
- Pupils’ progress and attainment in mathematics have been consistently below the national averages for at least two years.
- Standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 have been below the national average over time.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points.
- Occasionally, pupils’ behaviour lapses and there are instances of low-level disruption in lessons.
- Pupils’ rates of persistent absence are consistently above the national average.

The school has the following strengths

- The interim senior leadership team is leading the school effectively.
- The effective teaching of phonics enables pupils to make a good start in reading and writing.
- Leadership and teaching in the early years are good. Children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils are keen learners. They are proud of their school. Pupils, staff and parents agree that the school is safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - using the outcomes of monitoring checks to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is securely good throughout the school
 - ensuring that the school's website meets statutory requirements, so that current and prospective parents and carers have accurate information about the school
 - improving the leadership of, and provision for, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities so that pupils make consistently good progress from their starting points
 - using the outcomes of the recent curriculum review to secure good leadership of all subject areas across the school.
- Eliminate inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers use assessment effectively to set work that is well matched to pupils' abilities
 - there are increased opportunities for teachers to share more widely the effective practice which exists within the school
 - the teaching of mathematics is improved so that pupils' rates of progress and standards of attainment are at least in line with national averages.
- Improve attendance by reducing the rates of persistent absence to be at least in line with the national averages.
- Improve pupils' behaviour so instances of low-level disruption in lessons are rare.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- From September 2018, there have been significant changes in the leadership of the school, at all levels. Prior to this, leaders and those responsible for governance did not have an accurate view of the school's performance. This was because they were reliant on over-generous information provided by the previous leadership.
- In the past, leaders did not take effective action to prevent a decline in standards over time. They did not ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment was good throughout the school. Issues with some residual pockets of weaker teaching have not yet been resolved.
- Historically, leaders have provided too few opportunities for teachers to learn from each other to eliminate the inconsistencies in the quality of their practice.
- The interim headteacher, ably assisted by other interim leaders, has quickly identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The current plans for improvement are accurately focused on what needs to be done to improve teaching and raise standards.
- The coordinator for the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SENCo) does not have an accurate overview of the effectiveness of the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Because the SENCo does not monitor how teachers adapt their teaching and the curriculum to cater for pupils' needs, there are inconsistencies in the quality of additional support provided. Not enough pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. Parents and carers are not involved in the process of drawing up appropriate targets for their children. Some parents of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities expressed frustration regarding delays in securing effective support for their children.
- Leaders and staff have recently carried out a review of the school's curriculum. Previous issues with curriculum gaps and unnecessary repetition have been successfully addressed. Leaders have ensured that, from September 2018, the school's curriculum is broad and balanced. The work to ensure that effective subject leadership is in place, across the curriculum, is ongoing. Some subjects remain without a designated leader. Where subject leadership is strong, the work in pupils' books shows that they are acquiring a secure range of knowledge and skills.
- Middle leadership is improving. Appropriate training and support is in place for the new leaders. They are keen to develop their roles and have made a good start in doing so.
- Staff who spoke with inspectors described morale in the school as positive. They expressed support for the interim leadership team and said that fresh ideas are valued and encouraged. One member of staff aptly likened it to 'a cork being released from a champagne bottle'. Staff appreciate the range of training and professional development available for them. There is an effective plan in place for leaders to share the outcomes of their training more widely.
- Leaders and staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. The interim assistant headteacher provides effective leadership of this aspect of the school's work. She has ensured that the curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to study a range of world religions, enriched by trips and visitors,

alongside learning about Christianity. Assemblies effectively promote the school's values of 'We are all God's children and all the same.' Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own emerging beliefs through thought-provoking, interactive displays around school, such as 'What do you aspire to be?' Pupils' cultural development is effectively promoted through their participation in art and music festivals. Pupils who spoke with inspectors showed awareness of fundamental British values, as well as the school's 'gospel values'.

- Leaders ensure that they use the primary school physical education and sport funding effectively to promote pupils' physical fitness, health and well-being.

Governance of the school

- The St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Academies Trust is responsible for the governance of the school. The trust has acted decisively to identify the previous weaknesses in leadership and establish a new, interim leadership team with effect from September 2018. The trust has ensured that an appropriate plan is in place to support the school's interim leaders.
- Trust directors have replaced the local governing body by an interim improvement board from September 2018, with a precise remit to focus sharply on raising standards.
- The chair of the interim improvement board visits the school regularly. She provides effective support for the headteacher to enact the school's plans for rapid improvement.
- Those responsible for governance have not ensured that the school's website is compliant with statutory requirements. Some items are missing or out of date. As a result, current and prospective parents do not have accurate information about the school, from its website.
- The trust fulfils its statutory duties in regard to safeguarding. The chief executive officer carries out regular checks on the school's procedures.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have made sure that employment checks are in place, in line with statutory requirements.
- The school employs a family support worker, who works effectively alongside leaders to provide support for vulnerable pupils and their families. This has had a positive impact on pupils' well-being. Parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, expressed warm appreciation for this support.
- The school's safeguarding records are thorough. There is a clear system in place for raising and quickly responding to welfare concerns. All staff who spoke with inspectors confirmed a clear understanding of the procedures.
- Leaders have made sure that all teaching and support staff receive regular training and updates regarding safeguarding.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good. This means that some pupils do not learn and progress as well as they should. This was confirmed during the inspection by talking with pupils, checking their learning in lessons and the work in their books, and by considering the school's assessment information.
- The teaching of mathematics is not as strong as in English. Teachers do not use assessment to match the work consistently well to pupils' abilities. As a result, pupils sometimes struggle to complete work that is too hard for them. On other occasions, the work is too easy and pupils lose focus because they are not being sufficiently challenged in their thinking.
- When the work is mismatched to pupils' ability, or when the quality of teaching is otherwise weak, pupils may become confused or their behaviour deteriorates. Instances of low-level disruption were observed during the inspection, in a small proportion of lessons.
- Pupils' workbooks in Years 1, 2 and 3 show limited evidence of their work across a range of subjects and of their progress over time. In addition, the school's policy for the introduction of joined handwriting is not consistently applied across all year groups.
- Evidence from pupils' workbooks also shows that, where the teaching is strong, pupils' work is carefully presented and they are becoming increasingly proficient writers. This was typically seen in Years 4, 5 and 6. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have produced some impressive pieces of writing inspired by their history topics about the world wars. Pupils also produce work of high quality in their religious education books. Pupils in a Year 5 class were observed creating thoughtful and well-presented pieces of written work during a lesson about the life of Mother Teresa. Pupils wrote confidently and accurately, using a range of writing styles, for example an imaginary interview with Mother Teresa.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Pupils make a good start in learning to read and are able to apply their phonics knowledge well to improve their writing and spelling. Pupils in Years 1 and 6 who read to inspectors were confident and enthusiastic readers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school and praise its friendly atmosphere. Pupils have responded well to leaders' recent work to re-establish high expectations for personal appearance and pride in their school.
- The coordinator for personal, social and health education provides effective guidance for pupils. She has a weekly 'working lunch' with the school council representatives in order to support pupils to plan their own meetings. In response to requests from pupils for more lunchtime clubs, she has put arrangements in place to support pupils who wish to run activities for others. As a result, pupils are growing in self-sufficiency and

developing good leadership skills.

- Pupils who spoke with the lead inspector described the learning and activities they enjoy. For example, they said that science and art are popular subjects. Pupils recalled with enthusiasm learning about sound in their science lessons, and about the work of the architect Gaudi during art lessons connected to a topic about Spain.
- The extensive school grounds provide ample opportunities for pupils to enjoy a range of sports and activities to improve their fitness. Many pupils enjoy being physically active and the sports provision is a strength of the school. Pupils also appreciate the quieter areas that are provided for them to chat with friends or have time to reflect.
- Pupils, staff and parents agree that the school is safe. Pupils could describe the ways in which they are kept safe at school and the teaching they have received about staying safe from bullying.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils who spoke with the lead inspector described instances where behaviour is not as good as it might be. This occurs sometimes in lessons, when pupils might talk too much or distract others from their learning. At other times, behaviour at playtimes was described by pupils as being occasionally too rough.
- During the inspection, instances of low-level disruptive behaviour were observed in a small number of lessons.
- Rates of absence and persistent absence increased in 2017 to above the national average. The latest figures for 2018 show some improvement; however, the rate of persistent absence remains above the national average. The school's procedures for reducing term-time holiday absences are not robust enough and this is a significant issue for the school.
- Leaders shared with inspectors that there is a persistent issue at the school with punctuality. As a result, some pupils are missing important learning by not arriving at school on time.
- Pupils' conduct, as they move around the school, is orderly and courteous. This was observed during the inspection in all parts of the school and on both days.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Rates of progress and standards of attainment in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 have been below the national average for at least two years. This includes the latest, provisional figures for 2018.
- The combined results for attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 have remained well below the national average, for at least two years. This applies equally to disadvantaged pupils.
- The 2018 provisional results for attainment at the expected standard in grammar, punctuation and spelling at the end of key stage 2 declined from 2017 and are below

the national average.

- Pupils in the current Year 2 are making slow progress in mathematics. This was confirmed by checking the work in their books and by observations of learning in lessons.
- The school's latest internal assessment information shows that pupils' current attainment is not consistently good across all year groups. Attainment is stronger in the current Years 3 and 4 and weaker in Years 5 and 6, as a result of weaker teaching in the past. However, the latest work in pupils' books shows that standards are rising, especially in writing, in Years 5 and 6.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check increased in 2018 to above the national average. The provisional key stage 2 results for key stage 2 also show that pupils are making improved progress in reading.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership and teaching in the early years are good. As a result, children, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress and are well prepared for the demands of Year 1.
- Children enter the early years with skills below those typically expected, particularly in communication and language. The early years leader has responded promptly by ensuring that children receive additional, specialist support to catch up. As a result, in 2018, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development by the end of the year significantly increased and is now above the national average.
- The early years leader has acted swiftly and effectively to manage change in the Nursery class. Teachers and teaching assistants work as an effective team, establishing routines and modelling high expectations. As a result, children in the Nursery class settle well and get off to a flying start.
- The curriculum is well designed. It is built around the interests of children and their specific needs. For example, in the outdoor area, boys were seen improving their number skills by counting the buried treasure they had dug up while pretending to be pirates.
- Assessments of children are robust and accurate. Teachers and other staff explain activities well and ask probing questions. They provide appropriate resources to help children learn independently. Because of this, children concentrate well and remain focused during tasks. Children's behaviour is good.
- The teaching of early reading is effective. Phonics is taught well and threaded throughout the curriculum. Children's phonics skills are improving rapidly as a result, with some children already fluently reading simple words.
- Children have a good understanding of number. This is because they have many opportunities to consolidate and practise skills, such as counting and recognising numbers to 20. Some children are now ready to access more challenging learning, in order to deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective. Staff have all received the required training

and are knowledgeable about procedures to keep children safe from harm. Staff work effectively with external agencies, such as speech and language therapists, educational psychologists and early-help professionals.

- The partnership between staff and parents is effective. A typical parental comment was, 'My child has settled in so well and is really happy.' The use of home visits, parent questionnaires and visits to school ensure that children make a smooth transition between home and school.
- The outdoor environment is used well to promote children's learning, especially for children in the Nursery class. Children engage in a wide range of outdoor activities which develop social communication skills.

School details

Unique reference number	142742
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10057633

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	364
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees, St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Academies Trust
Chair	David Williams
Interim Headteacher	Jackie Robinson
Telephone number	01604 714 399
Website	www.thegoodshepherdatholicprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	head@thegoodshepherd.northants-ecl.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school joined the St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Academies Trust in April 2016. The trust is the responsible body for governance of the school. Until September 2018, the trust delegated some of its powers to a local committee, as set out in the scheme of delegation. From September 2018, the trust replaced the local committee with an interim improvement board, for one academic year, with a remit to focus sharply on school improvement.
- An interim leadership team is in place, from September 2018. This consists of an interim headteacher and two interim assistant headteachers. The early years leader and several other subject leaders are also new to their posts from September 2018.

- Since September 2018, the nursery provision, formerly known as the Little Lambs, has been run by the school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are of White British heritage is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 26 lessons or part lessons, some jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at work across an extensive range of pupils' books and considered the school's assessment information on the progress and standards achieved by current pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked with them about their reading.
- Inspectors met with the interim headteacher, other senior leaders and leaders with responsibility for English, mathematics, religious education, personal, social and health education, the early years and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Inspectors met with those responsible for attendance, behaviour, bullying and exclusions, disadvantaged pupils and the sport premium. They also met with other teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the interim improvement board for the St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Academies Trust.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer and another director of the trust.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day, on both days of the inspection. The lead inspector considered the 21 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the 16 responses to the online staff survey.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation, including the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation summary, minutes of meetings of the interim improvement board, the school's current information on pupils' attainment and progress, attendance records, behaviour and exclusion logs, external reports on the work of the school, monitoring and evaluation records and a range of documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Christine Watkins, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Steve Varnam	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jane Ferguson	Ofsted Inspector

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