

St Mary's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, South Moor

Hustledown, South Moor, Stanley, County Durham DH9 6PH

Inspection dates

5–6 December 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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The actions of leaders, including subject leaders and governors have not ensured consistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the key stages. As a result, pupils' progress across a range of subjects is variable.
- The headteacher has high aspirations for all pupils, however, these are not evident in the practice across the school. Not all staff have high enough expectations of what pupils can do and achieve.
- Senior leaders have not embedded a whole-school approach to the teaching, learning and assessment of reading. Some pupils have too few opportunities to read in school. Reading tasks and books are not well matched to pupils' phonic knowledge and skills. This means that too many pupils make slow progress in reading.
- Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that they are well looked after by staff. Senior leaders' record-keeping, however, is not sharp. Some records lack detail and chronology, making it difficult to identify leaders' actions and outcomes for pupils.
- Too often, teachers plan work that does not accurately meet the needs of pupils. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are not consistently positive. Not all pupils make good progress in their learning and some pupils drift off-task.
- Teachers do not use available teaching and learning time effectively. Pupils too often have to wait for additional support or challenge.
- The quality of teaching and learning in early years is variable. Children are not challenged well enough in their learning, and do not make consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has secured a positive ethos underpinned by the school's Christian values.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and caring.
- Pupils conduct themselves sensibly within school. They are polite, friendly and sociable.
- Leaders use the sports premium funding well to enhance pupils' physical education.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improved so that it is at least good in all year groups and subjects
 - a consistent approach to the teaching of reading is embedded across the school, including the early years
 - all subject leaders are equipped with the skills, knowledge and opportunities needed to manage their responsibilities effectively
 - additional funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has a positive effect on their attendance and progress
 - records and logs of incidents and staff training are suitably well detailed and kept fully up to date.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers use assessment information effectively to plan learning and tasks that accurately match the needs of all learners
 - all adults' expectations of what pupils can do and achieve across the curriculum are consistently high
 - all teaching and learning time is used effectively
 - teaching motivates pupils to learn and to focus effectively on their work
 - children in early years are suitably well challenged in their reading, writing and mathematics tasks.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders, at all levels, have not ensured consistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the key stages. They have not taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching and learning across a range of subjects.
- Leaders have not secured consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This means that not all pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders do not ensure that teaching and learning time is used effectively. Pupils wait for further challenge or support and drift off task. Too much time is taken up by transition activities, for example, pupils getting ready for break and lunchtimes.
- Senior leaders have not embedded consistently effective teaching, learning and assessment of reading. Some pupils, at times, are unable to fully access the curriculum because their reading skills are too low.
- Although there is developing strength in subject leadership, particularly in mathematics, the effectiveness of subject leadership remains inconsistent. Overall, subject leaders are not equipped with the skills, knowledge and opportunities needed to manage their responsibility effectively.
- Leaders and governors know what needs to improve. However, plans for improvement lack the necessary detail to pinpoint precisely how and when this will be achieved, and how the effect of actions taken will be measured, such as the effect on outcomes for pupils.
- The additional funding for pupils with SEND has been used to variable effect. For example, these pupils do not always have good attendance and they do not make consistently good progress across a range of subjects.
- Leaders make effective use of the physical education (PE) and sport premium funding. Teachers' skills in teaching physical education are developing through working with sports coaches. A greater range of extra-curricular sporting activities have been made available for pupils, for example dance, rugby and wheelchair basketball.
- The headteacher has built positive relationships with governors, staff and pupils and their families. She has developed a nurturing culture so that pupils feel well cared for. Staff feel that the headteacher holds their well-being in high regard.

Governance of the school

- Governors are supportive of leaders and are ambitious for pupils. They are aware of which aspects of the school require improvement. For example, governors know that there is variation in the quality of teaching across the school. They are becoming increasingly confident and able to challenge school leaders and hold them to account.
- Governors are knowledgeable about school life, they regularly volunteer in school and visit classrooms.
- Governors have undergone training and have been proactive in developing their skills

and knowledge. For example, they recently attended training to give them a better understanding of how to protect pupils from the risks of extremism and radicalisation.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- At the time of the inspection, the headteacher took prompt action to address administrative errors on the school's single central record of pre-employment checks on staff, and to provide additional clarity on school records and staff training logs. Leaders recognise the need to be more vigilant in keeping these records up to date.
- Child protection records are kept securely, these show where concerns have been raised about pupils and the action that has been taken in response.
- The headteacher has been proactive in organising a local authority safeguarding audit to take place in December 2018.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good. Not all adults working in the classroom have high enough expectations of what pupils can do and achieve. Consequently, pupils' rates of progress and learning across the curriculum are variable over time.
- Some teachers do not routinely take account of assessment information on pupils' existing skills and understanding. Too often, work planned does not match pupils' needs with sufficient precision and is then either too easy or too challenging. This results in some pupils, across the key stages, not being supported or challenged enough.
- Some teachers and teaching assistants do not check carefully how well pupils are progressing during teaching and learning time. Pupils are not routinely helped or challenged to move on in their learning. As a result, some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not have a consistently effective approach to the teaching of reading. The reading books and tasks teachers provide for some pupils do not match pupils' phonics skills and understanding. This means that progress in reading for some pupils is too slow. Sometimes, pupils are unable to access other areas of the curriculum well enough, for example problem-solving in mathematics, because their reading skills are not well developed.
- Generally, there are good relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and pupils. However, not all pupils, across different year groups, take sufficient pride in their work. Pupils are not routinely expected to try their best and the presentation of their work is variable.
- Pupils in upper key stage 2 benefit from effective teaching and teachers' high expectations. These teachers use their subject knowledge and secure use of assessment information to plan learning that challenges pupils. Nonetheless, this is not reflected across the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- Leaders' work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils' understanding of how to be a successful learner is not secure across different year groups. Some pupils do not demonstrate the motivation and self-discipline they need to make good progress in their learning.
- As a result of the school's caring ethos, pupils are friendly and sociable. They are warm and welcoming to visitors.
- Pupils have the opportunity to attend a range of before- and after-school clubs. The school's breakfast club provides a calm and positive start to the school day.
- Pupils in Year 6 benefit from having a variety of jobs to do around school. This includes running a healthy tuck shop for their peers and taking the role of playground buddies to support younger pupils. Through these leadership roles, pupils develop a range of skills including negotiation and empathy skills.
- Pupils demonstrate tolerance and respect for themselves and others. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and well cared for. They are confident that adults will deal with any concerns they may have.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Although pupils conduct themselves sensibly around school, some pupils, across the key stages, display off-task behaviour, particularly when teaching does not challenge them enough, or is too challenging.
- As a result of leaders' efforts, pupils' attendance overall has improved and is now above the national average. However, attendance for pupils with SEND has declined. Leaders monitor attendance and carry out home visits when necessary. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school is reducing over time.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' work demonstrates that they currently make inconsistent progress across a range of subjects. This is due to the quality of teaching and assessment, which varies across the key stages.
- Pupils make slow progress in developing their reading knowledge and skills. Consequently, some pupils, across key stages, are not able to read with the proficiency of their peers nationally. Pupils' attainment in reading at the end of key stage 1 has been below the national average over time.
- Some pupils, across the key stages and in a range of subjects, are not challenged enough to make the progress that they are capable of. In upper key stage 2, where

pupils are better challenged, current pupils' work in English, mathematics and science demonstrates stronger progress over time. The proportion of pupils achieving at the higher standards by the end of key stage 2 improved in 2018.

- By the end of key stage 1, attainment has improved over time in writing and mathematics.
- The percentage of pupils who pass the key stage 1 phonics screening check has improved over time and is now just below the national average.
- By the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, including for disadvantaged pupils, has improved over time. However, the progress pupils make has not been sufficiently rapid to catch pupils up with the national age related expected standards in reading.
- The school's own assessment information for pupils with SEND shows that pupils make variable rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Not all pupils with SEND are supported effectively in their learning and work.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Although improving, the percentage of children who achieve a good level of development by the time they leave Reception has been below the national average for the past three years. Additionally, the proportion of children reaching the early learning goals in reading, writing and mathematics has been too low compared to national averages. This means that not all children are ready to access the curriculum in Year 1.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in early years is variable. Adults do not consistently make the best use of learning time.
- Teachers' expectations of what children in the early years can do and achieve are variable. Consequently, not all children are adequately supported, or challenged in their learning.
- Leaders have made recent improvements to the early years environment, particularly in the opportunities available to children in the outdoors. However, there is too little challenge for children to develop their reading, writing and number skills better. Subsequently, children flit from task to task and make inconsistent progress in their learning.
- Leaders make concerted efforts to establish effective partnerships with children's families. This helps teachers and parents and carers to share important information about how to meet children's needs.
- Leaders have established purposeful relationships with local nursery providers. As a result, staff know the children well when they start at the school.
- Children behave well and respond promptly to the instructions of adults working in early years. All of the adults support children to be kind to one another and to share and take turns. As a result, children in the early years are happy and settled in their environment.
- The children are well looked after. Staff and children have positive, warm relationships.

School details

Unique reference number	114247
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10052987

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	134
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Mulhearn
Headteacher	Allison Robson
Telephone number	01207 232 189
Website	www.stmarysrcprimary.org.uk
Email address	southmoorstmary@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	8 February 2018

Information about this school

- St Mary's is a Roman Catholic school and is part of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. The school was inspected under section 48 in September 2016.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium funding is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The school has a breakfast club and provides a variety of after-school clubs.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning across all year groups. Some of these observations were conducted with school leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, governors and school staff, including senior and middle leaders. Inspectors also spoke with a representative from the local authority and a representative from the diocese.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at pupils' written work, information on pupils' attainment and progress and records of behaviour.
- Inspectors looked at documents, including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plans and information about attendance.
- Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding documents, including mandatory checks made on the recruitment of staff, and information on the school's website.
- Discussions were held with pupils and informal conversations took place during break and lesson times.
- Inspectors listened to pupils from across the school read and spoke to them about the books they enjoy.
- The inspection team took account of the eight responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, inspectors took into account the 20 responses from Ofsted's pupil survey and 13 responses from Ofsted's online staff survey.

Inspection team

Angela Whistler, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Fiona Manuel

Her Majesty's Inspector

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