

St Catherine's Roman Catholic School

Pymore Road, Bridport, Dorset DT6 3TR

Inspection dates

12–13 June 2019

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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not responded swiftly enough to the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. As a result, by the time pupils leave the school, their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is below average.
- The curriculum for subjects other than English and mathematics is underdeveloped. Although pupils have access to a range of subjects, the quality of learning is variable. Leaders have begun plans to improve the curriculum, but it is too soon to judge the impact of their work.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. This has partially been affected by staffing turbulence. Nevertheless, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. This weakens the progress pupils make.
- A number of parents are not confident in the leadership of the school. They do not understand well enough why leaders have taken some of the decisions they have. A proportion of parents feel that leaders do not address their concerns.
- Pupils do not have a sufficiently good understanding of British values.
- The quality of the outdoor provision in the early years is not effective. This is having a negative impact on children's opportunities to flourish across all areas of learning.
- Leaders and governors do not have a strong oversight of additional funding. As a result, they do not use funding effectively to make a difference to pupils' achievement.
- Middle leaders are new to their roles. They are not yet having a positive impact in driving improvements in their areas of responsibility.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher has stopped the decline in standards. She is rapidly bringing about change and improvements in the quality of leadership and teaching.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Pupils are safe in school and attend regularly.
- The interim academy board (IAB) has a secure understanding of the areas requiring immediate attention. It is making headway in improving pupils' outcomes.
- The teaching of phonics is effective.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management, including in early years, by ensuring that:
 - pupils develop a clear understanding of British values
 - communication between home and school is improved so that parents and carers have increased confidence in the leadership of the school
 - middle leaders have the knowledge and skills needed to effect improvements in their areas of responsibility
 - leaders monitor additional funding rigorously and check closely that planned actions are having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes
 - leaders achieve their plans for the curriculum and promote pupils' good achievement in all subjects
 - the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently strong across all areas of the school
 - outside provision in early years is well resourced to support children's development in relation to each of the early learning goals
 - trust officers continue to hold senior leaders to account.
- Improve outcomes for all groups of pupils, including in early years, by ensuring that:
 - children in early years attain as well as other children nationally
 - pupils' progress and attainment are in line with the national figures for reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and well-being, by:
 - ensuring that teachers capture pupils' interest by providing them with work that motivates them to learn
 - fostering pupils' good behaviours and attitudes to learning.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including in early years, by ensuring that:
 - teachers use assessment information to plan activities that build systematically upon what pupils already know, can do and understand
 - all staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, including in the presentation of their work.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Following the previous inspection, leaders, governors and the trust did not have a precise view of the weaknesses in the school. Leaders did not act swiftly enough to address the areas for improvement and raise standards. Issues such as weak teaching were not addressed adequately. Consequently, leaders did not stem the decline in pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders have not secured consistently good teaching across the school. They have not made sure that all teachers have high expectations of pupils and that pupils are challenged to reach their full potential from their different starting points.
- The relationship between a significant proportion of parents and the school is fragile. While some parents are supportive of the recent changes in the school's leadership, a proportion of parents are not as confident. Parents expressed significant concerns about communication from the school and the trust. A number of parents say they do not always understand why leaders need to take some of the decisions they do. Leaders, including the IAB, recognise that communication between home and school has not always been effective and have started to implement plans to improve this.
- The curriculum does not provide pupils with enough opportunities to deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills across all subjects. However, plans to redesign the curriculum are taking shape. Nevertheless, it is too early to see the impact of this work.
- Middle leaders are new to their roles. They are passionate and determined to continue to raise standards. However, opportunities to improve their capacity and areas of responsibility have been limited. Therefore, middle leaders are not having enough impact on school improvement. They do not yet have the required skills or time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils have a clear understanding of British values, although Year 6 pupils can talk about how their visit to the Houses of Parliament helped them understand democracy. Nevertheless, most pupils whom inspectors spoke with were not familiar with terms such as 'individual liberty' and 'tolerance'. They do not understand the contribution British values make to society.
- Leaders and governors are not rigorous enough in monitoring the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders allocate the funding appropriately to support pupils, but they do not review sharply enough whether it is having the intended impact on those pupils. This has contributed to pupils making weak progress.
- Leaders are not spending the physical education (PE) and sport premium appropriately. Although leaders use the funding to provide pupils with a range of sporting opportunities and experiences, such as tri-golf, they do not use it appropriately to develop the expertise of staff and improve the quality of PE teaching.
- Since her arrival, supported by trust officers, the acting headteacher is bringing about rapid improvements to the quality of teaching and leadership. An adviser from the trust is now playing a vital and more effective role in school improvement. Collectively, they have identified the urgent priorities and are setting about addressing them. However,

they have not had sufficient time to see any discernible impact of their work.

- The acting headteacher has worked diligently to recruit staff with permanent contracts. She has worked closely with staff to improve the school's systems and provision. As a result, she is securing greater capacity in leadership and in the quality of teaching and learning. Staff who spoke with the lead inspector said: 'There is a culture of united support throughout the school.' Almost without exception, staff gave highly positive responses to the staff questionnaire. Staff morale is high.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They regularly support local charities, such as 'Mary's Meals', in providing food for the less fortunate. Teachers also provide a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their social and moral skills in activities such as '40 random acts of kindness', which helps pupils to develop social and moral life skills. They also learn about other faiths such as Islam and Hinduism and have a good understanding of the different cultures in the world.

Governance of the school

- The quality of governance has not been effective in securing good outcomes for pupils. At the start of 2018, the trustees took the decision to disband the governing body and replace it with an IAB appointed by the trust. The IAB governors have extensive experience in educational leadership and can talk knowledgeably and with confidence about the school. They know the weaknesses in the school and have precise plans to secure rapid improvement. The IAB members are fully aware of their responsibilities, including in relation to safeguarding. The IAB welcomes a review of pupil premium funding.
- Leaders provide the IAB with good levels of information regarding many aspects of the school's work. Governors from the IAB are adept in holding leaders stringently to account for the school's effectiveness. They challenge leaders appropriately on a range of issues, including the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. Minutes of meetings confirm that IAB members challenge leaders appropriately.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are well trained in the most up-to-date guidance, including child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, neglect and the 'Prevent' duty, which focuses on pupils at risk of radicalisation and extremism. Staff are fully aware of their duty to report to leaders, without delay, any concerns they have.
- Leaders take appropriate measures to check that staff are suitable to work with children. They keep records of incidents meticulously. This enables leaders and governors to look for any trends or patterns and provide timely support for pupils. Staff work effectively with external agencies and make referrals where necessary. The most vulnerable pupils and families are well supported through additional support when they need it, for example through family support workers and health teams. These programmes of support are well thought out and have had a positive impact on pupils.
- Pupils are adamant that they are safe in the school. This view is also supported by a

large proportion of parents who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Pupils say that they feel safe, and that there are staff whom they can go to when they have concerns. The very large proportion of pupils who completed the pupil survey also say they feel safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- In some year groups, work is not matched well to meet the needs of all pupils from their different starting points. Not all teachers take sufficient account of pupils' prior knowledge when planning the next tasks they want them to complete. They do not always provide pupils with appropriate work that challenges them from their different starting points. This hampers them from reaching their full potential.
- Teachers in too many year groups do not expect pupils to complete their work neatly. They readily accept pupils' handwriting, even if it is messy.
- Where pupils have received temporary teaching over the past year, they have not made strong progress from their starting points.
- The quality of the teaching of the wider curriculum is variable and, in some lessons, pupils are not motivated or enthused to learn. Pupils are not developing a depth of knowledge in subjects such as science, history and geography; nor are they given opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills meaningfully. As a result, pupils are not producing high-quality work in the wider curriculum. Pupils whom inspectors met were unable to recall enough of what they had been taught previously.
- Pupils with SEND do not always have their needs met. This is because there is a lack of strategic oversight for the use of additional funding. Nevertheless, where support is in place, pupils' additional needs are well met. This is because teaching assistants know their pupils well and provide good support.
- The acting headteacher, ably supported by officers from the trust, is raising expectations about what pupils should be able to achieve. As a result, teaching is more effective.
- Teachers teach phonics well. They show pupils how to pronounce new words, and to use these in their writing. Pupils' work and observations of learning demonstrate that pupils apply their phonic knowledge well as they learn the early writing skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. The school does not promote British values well enough. Pupils who spoke with inspectors have a muddled view on what constitutes a British value.
- Staff teach pupils the importance of staying healthy. Pupils told an inspector what food groups make up a balanced diet. The cooked meals that are on offer are of good quality. Pupils have a range of extra-curricular sporting opportunities to promote a healthy lifestyle, such as gymnastics, dance, drama and running. This has resulted in

pupils from the school representing the regional cross-country team.

- Pupils develop leadership skills through roles such as classroom monitors, school councillors and sports leaders. Pupils are proud to have been chosen and carry out their responsibilities diligently.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe, including when using the internet, through lessons, themed weeks and assemblies. Pupils told an inspector, that 'anti-bullying week' is really helpful and reminds them how to respond to any worries. These events also give pupils guidance about how to keep themselves safe from dangers outside school. The large number of pupils that inspectors met consistently explained that bullying does not exist in the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In some lessons, where learning does not meet pupils' needs, a number of pupils lose concentration. While the large majority of pupils behave well, some low-level disruption impedes their progress.
- In a minority of classes, a small but significant number do not listen to their teachers and, consequently, do not follow instructions quickly enough. This wastes crucial time for learning.
- Attendance of pupils is a strength of the school. The vast majority of pupils value their education and attend well.
- Throughout social time, pupils cooperate well, play together and uphold the school's values. They understand the values of 'live, love and learn together' and are keen to adhere to them.
- Leaders have helped pupils at risk of exclusion with individualised support and by adapting the curriculum to meet their needs. A strong culture of equality permeates the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2018, the progress that pupils made by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics declined. Current pupils in Year 6 are making better progress from their starting points, although attainment is still too low in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because leaders were slow to act to address weak teaching. Consequently, these pupils are not as ready for secondary school as they should be.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 5 are beginning to make stronger progress from their starting points. However, this progress is not as apparent for all groups of pupils in all years, especially for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. A review of the provision in the school shows that leaders' use of additional funding is not meeting the academic needs of different pupils. Until recently, disadvantaged pupils' progress was not being checked closely enough. As a result, additional help was not provided to help pupils overcome their barriers to learning. These pupils do not make consistently good progress.
- Across the school, not enough of the most able pupils make strong progress. Their

gains from high starting points are not substantial enough for them to attain highly.

- Over time, pupils have not achieved in line with the national average for reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1. However, the school's own assessment information and work in pupils' books indicate that current pupils are making stronger progress than in previous years. Notably, pupils in Year 1 are making stronger progress than seen historically. This is because gaps in their learning are not as prevalent.
- Since the arrival of the acting headteacher, much better teaching is resulting in attainment starting to rise. Work in pupils' exercise books shows that pupils are starting to make positive progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Phonics outcomes at the end of Year 1 have increased for the last three years and in 2018 were above the national average. The teaching of phonics is effective. Pupils' good phonic skills are matched by their enjoyment of reading. Pupils whom inspectors met told them how much they enjoy reading.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Over time, children's outcomes have steadily increased to be in line with the national average. However, current performance information indicates a dip in attainment. This is because, children from different starting points are not having their needs met.
- Children's records of achievement, known as 'learning journeys', demonstrate significant differences in children's outcomes. This is especially so for children from a starting point that is lower than typical for their age, and disadvantaged children. Their progress across the year is not as positive as that of children whose starting points are typical or higher than typical for their age. As a result, children with starting points that are lower than typical for their age and disadvantaged children are not well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- The outside learning environment is not suitably equipped and resourced to enable children to flourish and achieve all the early learning goals. The provision does not provide sufficient opportunities for children to develop physically. This hampers children's progress.
- The early years leader has identified accurately the priorities for improvement and is working tirelessly to ensure that children receive a curriculum that motivates and fosters a love of learning. For example, during the topic 'people who help us', she arranged for the local lifeboat crew and other emergency services to visit the school to provide a real-life stimulus for children.
- Staff have focused on developing teaching that meets children's interests. Adults plan activities, linked to a theme, that interest children and capture their imagination. During the inspection, many children were enthused by the role-play area. They enjoyed dressing up and made a shelter using a range of materials. Staff intervene in a timely way and ask thought-provoking questions to challenge children's thinking.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Children use their phonic knowledge to read and spell words. The most able children use and apply their skills to develop their early writing well.

- Relationships between adults and children are very positive. Staff are full of enthusiasm and spark. Children cooperate well with each other and enjoy working and playing together. There is an unmistakable buzz of laughter in the air. They have positive attitudes to their learning and are willing to work hard for adults.
- Children behave well in early years because adults ensure that routines and expectations are well embedded.
- Leaders work closely with other settings to ensure that children's transition into Reception is effective. In particular, they pay close attention to exploring the needs of children with SEND and vulnerable children. This is to ensure that they settle quickly and receive the support they need.
- There are many opportunities for parents to be part of their children's learning. Parents receive a fortnightly overview of learning and are invited to attend subject-specific workshops to help them support their children at home.
- Leaders have ensured that they meet early years welfare requirements. Children are happy, safe and well looked after by kind, caring adults.

School details

Unique reference number	140757
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10088330

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	182
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	John Burnett
Headteacher	Frances Guppy
Telephone number	01308 423568
Website	www.stcatherinesbridport.dorset.sch.uk
Email address	office@stcatherinesbridport.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 January 2017

Information about this school

- St Catherine’s Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school and is part of the Plymouth CAST. The trust was formed in April 2014. The work of the trust is overseen by a board of directors. The trust is responsible for one nursery, one first school, 32 primary schools and two secondary schools across six local authorities in the south-west region.
- The majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND, including with an education, health and care plan, is above the national average.
- The school is designated as having a religious character and received its section 48

inspection in June 2018, when the school was graded as requiring improvement.

- The substantive headteacher was absent during the inspection. Interim leadership arrangements have been in place since December 2018. An acting headteacher from the trust has been in post since February 2019.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in classes across the school. Most observations were undertaken jointly with the acting headteacher and assistant headteacher. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour around the school and at social times.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, the leader with responsibility for pupils with SEND, early years and a sample of support and teaching staff.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with two governors, including the chair of the interim academy board.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils formally and informally during their break- and lunchtimes and in class. Inspectors also listened to groups of pupils read.
- The lead inspector held meetings with trust officers who are responsible for educational standards in the trust.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including minutes of meetings of the interim academy board, the school's self-evaluation document, the school's improvement plan, and documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors examined a large sample of pupils' books from across the school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they collected their children from school in the afternoon. The lead inspector also considered 58 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, 15 responses to the staff survey and the 17 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Martin Greenwood

Ofsted Inspector

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