

St Patrick's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Smith Street, Ryhope, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear , SR2 0RQ

Inspection dates 13–14 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although most pupils make expected progress, they do not all make good progress from their starting points.
- There is not enough good and outstanding teaching. The pace of teaching and learning is too slow in some lessons and the work, especially for the most-able pupils, is not always challenging enough.
- Girls' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and progress from their starting points at the end of Key Stage 2 is significantly lower than that of boys.
- Marking in mathematics does not always make it clear to pupils how they can improve their work and teachers do not always ensure that pupils have an opportunity to make improvements.
- Pupils' overall attendance requires sustained improvement.
- Leaders' plans and actions have not yet resulted in a sufficient improvement in the quality of teaching and in some groups of pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught well and make good progress in a well-equipped and improving environment.
- The teaching of phonics in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 results in a significantly higher proportion than average achieving the standard in the Year 1 phonics screening test.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved and is now good and sometimes outstanding, throughout the school. Pupils are polite, well-mannered and courteous. They know how to keep themselves safe and have exceptional knowledge about the dangers of cyber-bullying.
- The Primary School Sport funding is used exceptionally well to enhance the skills of staff in teaching physical education.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed parts of eight lessons taught by six teachers, including two jointly with the headteacher. She also listened to pupils read and undertook a scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Discussions were held with two groups of pupils about the standard of behaviour and quality of learning in school.
- The inspector met a number of parents informally, took account of the school's most recent parent and pupil questionnaires and 15 staff questionnaires.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, a representative from the local authority, the Chair of the Governing Body, the vice-chair and one other governor.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's view of its own performance, a local authority review of the Early Years Foundation Stage, improvement planning, monitoring records, policies, information about pupils' attainment and progress, pupils' books, minutes of governing body meetings, the school's website and records of attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Belita Scott, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (the additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and for whom English is an additional language are below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been significant changes to staffing over a three-year period and, most recently in September 2013, a newly qualified teacher was appointed together with a new leader responsible for English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is good or better across the school by:
 - ensuring that all staff use assessment data more effectively to meet pupils' individual needs, including providing appropriate levels of challenge, particularly for the most-able pupils
 - increasing the pace of learning to enable pupils to make more rapid progress
 - developing the ability of all teachers to ask challenging questions which require detailed answers and result in improved learning
 - improving the quality of marking, especially in mathematics, so that pupils understand how to improve their work and are given time to act upon advice immediately
 - sharing best practice across the school so that lessons are planned well, exciting and challenging for all pupils, especially girls and the most-able.
- Increase the impact of leadership on how well pupils learn, especially girls and the most-able, by:
 - raising the expectations of all staff about what constitutes good or better progress
 - ensuring that systems to check and evaluate the quality of teaching are timely and rigorous
 - improving the ability of leaders at all levels to check on and improve their areas of responsibility.
- Improve attendance across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because, although most pupils make expected progress, not enough make more than expected progress from their individual starting points. This is because of turbulent staffing over recent years which has led to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and a lack of challenge for the most-able pupils.
- The majority of children joins the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities which are typical for their age and make good progress to reach and exceed expected levels.
- Pupils achieve significantly above national expectations in the Year 1 assessment of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). Although pupils of all ages enjoy reading, not enough pupils, given their starting points, achieve the higher levels in reading at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- In Key Stage 1, attainment in writing is broadly average whilst attainment in reading and mathematics is below national expectations. Boys attain higher standards than girls in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Similarly, in Key Stage 2, attainment in writing is broadly average whilst attainment in reading and mathematics is below national expectations. Boys make more progress than girls from their starting points, between the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in writing, reading and mathematics.
- Despite Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils attaining below average in the most recent reading and mathematics statutory assessments, this still represents good progress from their starting points.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress similar to that of other pupils because of targeted support and the nurturing environment in school. The school is fully committed to ensuring that every child has equality of opportunity although this is not being fully achieved by girls and more-able pupils.
- Pupils who receive support funded by the pupil premium make progress similar to that of their classmates because of the well-targeted work by teaching assistants with individuals and small groups. Year on year the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is so small that it is statistically invalid to make any comparison between their attainment and progress and other pupils in the school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is not strong enough overall to enable enough pupils to make more than expected progress. This is because the pace of teaching and learning, particularly in the acquisition of new skills and knowledge, is too slow in too many lessons and because work is not always challenging enough, especially for the most-able pupils.
- Where teaching is stronger, teachers ask probing questions and insist on reasoned answers to gauge pupils' understanding. In these lessons, pupils are given the opportunity to develop their understanding through the use of talk-partners. The pace of learning is swift in the best lessons and teachers have high expectations of themselves and their pupils. At the beginning of an upper Key Stage 2 writing lesson, a teacher told pupils that 'Every second counts' and they went on to make outstanding progress. However, this is not always the case, because in weaker lessons the work is too easy, the questions teachers ask are not challenging enough and pupils do not make good enough progress.
- In better lessons, pupils are given the opportunity to use and apply their knowledge in practical problem-solving activities. This was seen in a Year 4 class where groups of pupils worked co-operatively to estimate and measure; they then confidently presented their answers in millimetres, centimetres and metres. However, these well-planned, exciting and challenging

problem-solving activities are not yet evident across the whole school.

- Teaching assistants are used effectively in the better lessons, particularly in their support of lower-ability pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and pupils eligible for the pupil premium.
- The marking policy is followed across the school and a scrutiny of work shows that pupils' work is marked regularly and conscientiously. In literacy, pupils have opportunities to respond to marking and feedback at the beginning of the next lesson. This does not happen as often in mathematics and opportunities are missed to help pupils, especially the most-able, to make better progress.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and is characterised by high quality questioning and communication between children and adults. Children were seen to be engrossed in teacher-led and self-chosen activities in both the indoor and outdoor environments.
- Teaching makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly in the way they support each other and work together co-operatively throughout the school. For example, every child in the Reception class is pleased to have a Year 6 buddy to help them during their first year in school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- As a result of a whole-school approach to behaviour management, pupils' behaviour has improved over time and is now good, and sometimes outstanding, in lessons and around school. Pupils behave well when they are taking part in small-group work with teaching assistants and when they are in the playground supervised by support staff.
- Pupils are polite, well-mannered and courteous to each other and to adults. This enables them to work co-operatively together when learning in pairs or groups.
- The school's comprehensive records evidence a year-on-year reduction in incidences of poor behaviour. Parents now have a positive view of the way behaviour is managed in school.
- There is a harmonious atmosphere throughout the school, pupils feel safe and trust their caring teachers implicitly. They explained that bullying incidences, although rare, are dealt with immediately. Pupils have a deep knowledge of the nature of cyber-bullying; some have attended an e-safety conference with the headteacher and subsequently have led a whole-school assembly on the prevention of cyber-bullying.
- Pupils hold many areas of responsibility throughout the school, examples being the democratically elected school council and the reading buddies in upper Key Stage 2 who work with Key Stage 1 pupils.
- Pupils arrive on time for school. Attendance is not yet good enough, and due to some families taking extended holidays in term time, remains below the national average, despite a number of school and local authority initiatives.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders' actions have not yet led to sufficient improvement in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.
- The senior leadership team has been strengthened by the appointment of a new leader for English and mathematics in September 2013. This leader has completed action plans for both subjects but their implementation has yet to impact fully on improving achievement and the quality of teaching in these subjects. In addition, checks on the quality of teaching have not always been timely enough to bring about rapid improvement.
- Leaders and teachers review pupils' progress on a half-termly basis and relevant and appropriate support is identified to enable pupils to catch up with their peers. This is beginning to have a positive impact on improving pupils' achievement in reading and the acquisition of phonic knowledge in Key Stage 2.

- The systems to manage teachers' performance are well-established, objectives are linked to the Teachers' Standards and there is a definite link between appraisal and any increases in salary. However, some staff are still not yet fully aware of what constitutes good or better pupils' progress.
- The recent positive impact of leaders' actions demonstrates the school's capacity to improve. The headteacher has taken positive steps to improve pupils' behaviour; together with other leaders he knows how well the school is performing and judgements on the quality of teaching are accurate. This means that leaders understand clearly what needs to be done to improve the school's overall performance and this is beginning to impact on the quality of teaching throughout the school.
- The school ensures that all pupils have access to the full range of subjects and activities and learn without fear of any type of discrimination. The provision for girls and the most-able pupils is not yet good, however, and still has some weaknesses, as leaders acknowledge.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' personal, social and health education is a strong aspect of the school's work, pupils' well-being is promoted through ensuring that they participate in regular sport and exercise and are encouraged to eat and live healthily. Upper Key Stage 2 pupils benefit from outdoor and adventurous activities during residential visits, whilst throughout the school pupils experience a wide range of visits and visitors. Lessons are planned using imaginative themes which often reflect pupils' interests. Themed days take place regularly and have recently included an International Day and a Roald Dahl Day.
- The Primary School Sport funding (additional funding provided by the government to promote sport and healthy lifestyles) is being used effectively to provide a range of physical activities for pupils and training for staff which has improved their teaching of physical education.
- The local authority provides appropriate support, for example, in reviewing aspects of the school's work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have high expectations and are ambitious for the school. They have requested and taken part in local authority training, for example, on performance data analysis. Governors hold 'headteacher challenge meetings', the minutes of which evidence rigorous questioning about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. The governors meet the statutory requirements for safeguarding, have an effective understanding of finance in relation to small schools, check on the impact of pupil premium and understand the short-term nature of sport funding. Governors are kept well-informed about the performance management of teachers and the link between pay and performance.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	108845
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	425791

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	123
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Hendy
Headteacher	Gerry Kelly
Date of previous school inspection	11 January 2012
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