

St Clare's Catholic Primary School

Robert Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B20 3RT

Inspection dates 20–21 September 2012

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		Require improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Major changes to the leadership and management of the school have slowed the planned improvements in teaching and assessment.
- Recent improvements in school based systems, routines and processes have not had sufficient time to ensure good achievement across the school.
- Governors have not had the detailed information they need to be closely involved in improving the school.
- Teaching still requires improvement in some classes; not all teachers use accurate assessment information to plan work that is demanding enough, so learning is sometimes too slow.
- Opportunities are missed to help pupils to learn independently.
- Not all adults who work with teachers in lessons have had enough training in how to develop pupils' language skills.

The school has the following strengths

- The new executive leadership team has quickly gained the confidence of staff and pupils and is committed to, and capable of, raising standards across the school.
- The careful nurturing and expert language support which pupils receive when joining the school accelerates their progress and enables them to achieve well in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- The teaching of letters and sounds, and effective approaches to handwriting and numeracy are giving pupils the right basic skills.
- Behaviour is good. There is a culture of mutual respect and calm across the school because the clear and inclusive values are understood and applied by all.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 22 lessons, three of which were joint observation with the executive headteacher and the head of school. In addition the inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons and looked at the work completed by pupils during the previous school year.
- Discussions were held with two groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, one other governor, the three phase managers, the learning mentor, the coordinator of support for pupils who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and a professional adviser for Birmingham schools.
- The inspectors took account of the two responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), the responses to parental questionnaires provided by the school, school planning and monitoring documentation, and data relating to pupils' current progress.

Inspection team

Cathy Morgan, Lead inspector

Paul Delbridge-Smith

Kathryn Skan

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Clare's Catholic Primary School is a larger-than-average primary school.
- A new headteacher and executive headteacher took up their posts in September 2012. Prior to that an acting headteacher was in post for a term.
- The number of pupils who join or leave the school at different times through the year is higher than that seen nationally.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for extra funding (about 43%) is higher than the national average.
- The large majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action level (about 9%) is slightly below average, and the proportion who are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is slightly higher than average, at 10%.
- The school's 2011 results met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - increasing the accuracy, frequency and breadth of observations of pupils' learning in lessons by senior leaders
 - ensuring that teachers plan lessons that are tailored to meet the different needs and abilities of all pupils, to ensure they are appropriately challenged, can learn independently and attain the highest standards
 - providing specialist training for support staff to further enhance and extend the effective specialist language provision
 - improving the quality of the outdoor learning environment to increase opportunities for pupils to learn imaginatively through play.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - strengthening the robustness of the performance management processes to ensure that leaders at all levels understand their roles, responsibilities and accountability
 - ensuring the timely receipt and use of school data, policies and documents by the governing body to enable governors to be more actively involved in identifying improvement targets and to hold leaders and managers to account for their achievements.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although there is some good and often outstanding progress, achievement requires improvement because learning in lessons is not consistently strong. Progress is best in Key Stage 2.
- In Key Stage 2, many pupils, including those who join the school at different times through the year, receive highly personalised and expert individual intervention and language support which accelerates their progress and enables them to make at least good progress in English and mathematics. This intervention promotes equality of opportunity particularly well.
- In contrast, there are few opportunities for pupils to receive specialist language support in whole-class lessons in either key stage. When this is coupled with work that does not challenge enough, or involve pupils actively enough, the pace of learning is slow. Most teaching assistants have yet to receive training to enable them to provide effective language support.
- Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and aptitudes which are below expected levels. Rigorous assessment ensures that they receive careful nurturing and effective teaching to enable them to increase in confidence and make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.
- A high proportion of pupils enter Key Stage 1 with limited skills in spoken and/or written English. While attainment at the end of Year 2 is low, many pupils make the progress expected and some achieve well.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) and effective implementation of the schools' well-established handwriting and numeracy schemes enable pupils to extend their knowledge of letters and sounds to improve their reading and to write and calculate accurately. A high proportion of pupils make better-than-expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics between Year 2 and Year 6.
- Reading is given a high priority across the school. Teachers, parents and carers work together to ensure that pupils read every day, and their progress is rigorously monitored through their reading record books. By the end of Key Stage 1 many pupils are confident readers and they talk with enthusiasm about the range of books they have read.
- In one Year 5 lesson, pupils' enjoyment of the book 'Matilda' was instrumental in engaging them in a challenging activity to extend their use of punctuation. They were diligent and attentive throughout the lesson and produced a high standard of writing which was particularly neat in presentation.
- Pupils known to be eligible for extra funding, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs typically make similar progress to their peers in English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teachers are highly committed to helping pupils to learn successfully and are skilled in motivating pupils to do well. Typically, activities are well organised and in the most successful lessons pupils are active and creative. Appropriate and regular homework contributes well to pupils' learning.

- The excellent one-to-one and small group English language support provided by a multilingual teaching assistant is highly effective. In one outstanding intervention session, expert use of a range of effective audio-visual resources enabled a small group of vulnerable and nervous pupils to quickly develop their self-confidence and extend their understanding and pronunciation of key words.
- In the less successful lessons, teachers instruct the whole class for too long and although whole class questioning and discussion often aids pupils' understanding, too often it involves few pupils and limits opportunities for the majority to work independently. On such occasions, it is often, though not always, the more-able pupils whose needs are not fully met and as a result achievement in those lessons requires improvement.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils are given an appropriate balance between teacher-led work and times when they learn through play. The quality of this play is better inside than in the outdoors, where there is less to challenge the children's imagination.
- Teachers monitor pupils' work regularly in lessons and provide useful oral feedback when acknowledging accurate responses or identifying pupils' misconceptions. Pupils are set academic targets, but teachers do not always refer to them in lessons or in marking and, as a result, pupils are sometimes unsure how to improve their work or to progress to a higher level.
- Assessment of pupils' progress is used well to make judgements about the standard of their work. Teachers use this effectively to plan future learning activities and to target specialist support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Teaching assistants are not always effectively deployed nor sufficiently prepared to apply the instructions and requirements set by teachers to ensure that support for pupils is consistently effective and purposeful.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The mutual respect between pupils and adults contributes well to the school's strong, positive ethos and calm atmosphere. Pupils are happy and have excellent opportunities to participate in thoughtful school assemblies and to celebrate Mass when they sing and pray together. This promotes their good behaviour and safety and their effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - Teachers and teaching assistants demonstrate high standards for the presentation of work and for behaviour in lessons. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to learning and take pride in their work. Their presentation of work is of a high standard and handwriting is exceptionally neat. They work hard and show mature attitudes to their work, even when teaching is not of the highest quality.
 - Relationships are strong and on the few occasions when individuals lose concentration, teachers respond quickly and effectively to bring them back on task. Teachers constantly endorse pupils' 'good sitting' and 'good listening' and encourage pupils to become responsible for their own behaviour. Pupils are generally respectful and helpful towards one another when given the opportunity to work together.
 - Pupils feel safe and show a good understanding of the risks associated with, for example, the use of new technology. Pupils are adamant that behaviour is consistently good and that
-

there is little bullying.

- Despite limited resources and uninspiring surroundings, support staff work hard to encourage pupils to engage in activities at playtime and during the lunch break. There are occasional fallings out but pupils say that these are quickly resolved by staff. Older pupils take their role as 'Playground Leaders' very seriously and are rightly proud of their training and the opportunity to wear their special hats.
- The schools' learning mentor is effective in providing support for pupils who have behavioural or emotional difficulties. This support enables pupils to develop their own behaviour strategies and learn self-control. Detailed records of the few incidents of pupils' misbehaviour demonstrate effective liaison between the school and parents, carers and specialist agencies.
- The school, parents and carers have worked extremely hard together to promote the importance of punctuality and to improve attendance, which is now around the national average.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- A lack of consistency in leadership has meant teaching has not improved rapidly and so pupils do not yet benefit from consistently good practice. Though there are many examples of good progress, it is too dependent on the efforts of individuals rather than good management, and therefore vulnerable to staffing changes.
- Nevertheless, rapid improvements in the leadership and governance of the school have given staff high aspirations for pupils' academic and personal development. The clear vision and ambition of the recently appointed senior leadership team have been quickly acknowledged and welcomed by the governing body and by school staff. This has been particularly important in securing and maintaining the good progress made by a significant number of pupils.
- The executive headteacher and the head of school have gained the trust of staff which has enabled them to rapidly focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. All staff are challenged positively and effectively to improve. The local authority has carried out an accurate evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning. However, other senior leaders have had limited opportunities to observe and accurately assess the quality of pupils' learning in lessons.
- Records and analysis of performance management have not been established long enough to demonstrate an impact. Roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability are now more clearly understood by leaders at all levels, but many have limited experience of providing robust management.
- Effective intervention by the local authority has ensured that all leaders and managers now have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Staff are already collaborating effectively with their partner school to share best practice. The enthusiastic new staff are receiving good support in consolidating the basic skills of teaching by being paired with more experienced staff, who themselves are receiving further training and opportunities to acquire further qualifications.
- Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum, which is well designed to provide them with a range of cultural and religious experiences and opportunities to participate in a range of enrichment activities.

- The school has strong links with the local community, which ensure a thorough understanding of its differing needs, aspirations, values and diversity. Regular and informative communications with parents and carers ensure that they are fully informed about and actively involved in their children's education.

 - All statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are met.

 - **The governance of the school:**
 - is supportive, and appropriately aware of the school's overall strengths and weaknesses
 - has been effectively reorganised to ensure that governors can more easily challenge leaders and managers to meet the school's targets for improvement
 - does not always receive and use achievement data, school policies and documents in a timely manner, so is not always fully involved in identifying improvement targets and strategic priorities.
-

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	103476
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	400620

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	390
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara McPhillips
Headteacher	Mark Humphreys (Executive)
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2010
Telephone number	0121 554 3289
Fax number	0121 523 5854
Email address	head@stclare.bham.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

