

# Our Lady and St Benedict Catholic Primary School

Abbey Lane, Abbey Hulton, Stoke on Trent, ST8 8AU

**Inspection dates** 7–8 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- Teaching does not help all pupils to achieve well enough.
- Not all pupils make expected progress in some year groups, and in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 cannot read as well as other pupils nationally.
- Teaching does not promote good progress for all pupils, particularly those currently in Year 4.
- Some teachers do not help pupils to learn well enough in lessons.
- Leadership and management require improvement.
- Plans to improve the teaching of mathematics are unclear.
- School leaders do not focus sufficiently on the progress pupils make in lessons as a result of good teaching, and so cannot further improve how well all teachers teach.
- The school's checks on its performance are inaccurate.
- School plans to drive improvement lack sufficient detail.
- Some leaders, relatively new to their roles, are ineffectively prepared to lead the areas for which they are responsible.
- Governors do not question senior leaders closely enough about why pupils are not learning well enough. This weakens the leadership and management of the school because governors do not have accurate information to guide the school's direction.

### The school has the following strengths

- In year groups, such as Years 6, 5 and 3, pupils make or exceed the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics because of effective teaching.
- Pupils are polite and well behaved at all times in this harmonious school community.
- Attainment in writing has improved since the previous inspection because of the better teaching of writing skills.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons or part lessons, two of which were joint observations, one with the headteacher and one with the deputy headteacher. Inspectors observed break times and listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, a local authority representative and school staff. A telephone interview took place between the lead inspector and the Chair of the Governor Body. The returns from the staff questionnaires were also analysed.
- Inspectors took account of eight responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) as well as a recent survey of parents' views carried out by the governing body.
- A number of school documents were examined including information about pupils' progress and school development plans. The work in pupils' books and records relating to behaviour, attendance and procedures to keep pupils safe were also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Declan McCauley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Bimla Kumari

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Since the last inspection, the number of pupils on roll has increased.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is higher than that found in most schools.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than that found in most schools.
- Most pupils are White British and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the additional pupil premium funding is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is working with the eight local Catholic schools towards gaining academy status and an application for this has been submitted to the Department for Education.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of all teaching to good or outstanding by:
  - matching more precisely learning tasks to the needs of all pupils
  - ensuring no learning time is wasted in lessons
  - increasing how quickly pupils learn in every lesson
  - planning more for pupils to show they can get on with their work and learn on their own
  - sharing the existing good practice within school.
- Improve achievement for pupils throughout the school by:
  - ensuring pupils make or exceed expected progress in all year groups, particularly in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2
  - increasing rapidly pupils' attainment in reading by the end of Key Stage 1.
- Strengthen how well all leaders and managers are improving the school by:
  - ensuring governors check carefully the work of school leaders in improving how well pupils learn
  - focusing more precisely on how well teaching is helping pupils to learn in lessons
  - enabling all new leaders to lead their areas of responsibility effectively
  - using checking procedures to help form precise plans for future performance
  - ensuring mathematics is led effectively.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children start school with skills that are typically below those expected for their age. Currently, the youngest children are making good progress, although historically this was not the case. Last year, children left the Early Years Foundation Stage having made less progress than expected due to many changes in staffing.
- By the time pupils leave Year 2, they are below the nationally expected standards despite having made steady progress. They are well below the standards of other pupils of their age in reading. This is due to the slower progress they made while in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- In Key Stage 2, the rate of progress made by pupils varies greatly from year group to year group. In Years 6, 5 and 3, most pupils make rapid progress because of effective teaching.
- Pupils make much better progress in writing now than at the time of the previous inspection because of the focus of school leaders on improving the teaching of writing. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils read with much expression and great fluency. They say how they thoroughly enjoy reading.
- In lower Key Stage 2, many pupils do not learn well enough because of weak teaching. In order to gain success, pupils learn rapidly in the current Year 5 and Year 6 class.
- Not all pupils do as well as expected in mathematics by the end of Year 6, although in English they do. In English and mathematics combined, more pupils exceeded the progress expected of them than nationally.
- At the end of Year 6, standards attained by pupils are below those expected nationally in English and more so in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those supported at school action or school action plus, do well because of well-managed support specifically designed to help them to make good progress. Equality of opportunity is promoted well for these groups and helps them to make good progress in their learning.
- Pupils supported by additional pupil premium funding do well and many make rapid progress because of the additional support and resources they receive.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching varies between year groups. A few teachers enable pupils to learn very well in lessons. In other lessons, where teaching is weaker, all pupils undertake the same learning task such as all identifying the same time on clocks so that pupils do not learn well enough.
- In better lessons, teachers set work which helps pupils to learn well whatever their ability. For example, pupils in Year 6 were asked to identify the key features from specific texts which were well matched to ability level and interests. Strong teaching was also observed in other year groups. In these lessons pupils learn quickly and the work is difficult enough to make them think hard and so gets the best out of them. Some teachers ensure no learning time is wasted in lessons and pupils are encouraged to work things out for themselves resulting in greater progress. These specific high quality teaching methods are not shared between teachers to help them all improve their teaching.
- In lessons where teaching is not as strong, teachers slow the rate of learning by talking too much instead of allowing pupils to get on with their work. In some classes, teachers do not give higher- or lower-ability pupils work which gets the best out of them. A few teachers do not explain fully to pupils what they expect of them when they are working out problems for themselves and this results in confusion for pupils.
- When setting up learning activities for pupils, a few teachers stop pupils from learning quickly enough by distributing materials which means pupils sit waiting for long periods of time before they can begin to learn.

- Pupils know their targets and what they have to do to achieve them. Most teachers mark work clearly so that they help pupils do better next time. Many exercise books show pupils make good progress in year groups where teaching is better.
- Teaching assistants and other adults make sure pupils learn well. They provide a high level of successful support for the pupils with whom they work. These pupils learn well because of the well-structured way in which adults work with them.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers are now helping children to make rapid progress by providing a range of purposeful experiences. During the inspection, children were observed in the forest school area very effectively using numbers to solve mathematical challenges. These children were provided with a rich and wide range of outdoor activities which made them eager to learn.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They are polite and very courteous towards each other and adults.
- In lessons, pupils listen attentively and work hard. Occasionally, pupils lose interest when they have to sit and listen for too long to the teacher. Some pupils become restless. Pupils happily explain they enjoy attending school; their attendance has increased and is above average.
- The playground is a happy and orderly environment where pupils can participate in well-run activities. Pupils enjoy the wide range of activities. They interact particularly well with adults who take care of them at lunchtime.
- Peer mediators help to keep up this good behaviour. Their role is seen by their fellow pupils as at the heart of the good relationships in school. On rare occasions when pupils fall out with each other, the peer mediators skilfully help to solve the difficulties. If this is not possible, they know they can ask a teacher who will help if necessary.
- Pupils report some minor instances of bullying but explain that when they approach an adult these are rapidly resolved to their satisfaction. There is some name-calling but pupils agree this is relatively rare and again dealt with firmly by teachers and other adults.
- Pupils agree they feel safe in school. They expressed some concern over the possibility of teenagers climbing over their playground fence. Further investigation by inspectors revealed that this happened in the past in the evenings and at weekends and not during the school day. Many pupils consulted do not feel this is a current concern.
- Staff and pupils agree the school is a safe environment in which pupils learn. A recent survey by members of the governing body revealed this is the overwhelming view of parents.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors share the view that they want the school to become outstanding. Many staff also share this view and are working hard to make sure of future improvement.
- Since the previous inspection, the quality of pupils' writing has improved because leaders have concentrated on improving it.
- Teaching has improved in some year groups since the previous inspection, although in other year groups inadequacies remain. Therefore, weaker teaching remains and results in a minority of pupils in lower Key Stage 2 making slow progress or no progress at all.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher clearly identify elements of stronger and weaker teaching when observing lessons. Sometimes they do not link the impact of how well teaching helps pupils to learn either on their own or in groups.
- The headteacher's view of how well pupils are learning in school is more positive than the real picture. Therefore, planning for further improvement is not always based on solid foundations although the correct areas for improvement are identified clearly.

- The curriculum is well planned and pupils have opportunities to apply their basic skills in a wide range of subjects. Pupils' books show they apply their writing skills well in their topic books.
- New leaders with specific responsibilities are not always given sufficient support or opportunity to help them to succeed and bring about necessary improvements. Currently, there is no leader for mathematics despite some pupils' weaker progress in achievement last year.
- Arrangements for keeping pupils safe in school meet the current requirements. Detailed records of checks carried out on school staff before they begin to work at school demonstrate how seriously pupils' safety is viewed.
- The local authority is providing effective support for teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This has successfully improved the progress children are making since the start of this school year.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body have worked with school leaders to bring about some improvements since the previous inspection. They have arrangements in place to check pupils' achievement. However, these are not good enough to speed up improvement.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124317
<b>Local authority</b>	Stoke on Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	406232

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	165
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Diane Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Debbie Sims
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 September 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 234636
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