

St Mary and St John Catholic Primary School

Beaufort Road, Erdington, Birmingham, B23 7NB

Inspection dates

19–20 March 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		Requires improvement	3
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

- Improvements in achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2 are recent and pupils do not make consistently good progress as they move through the school.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good and varies too much across the school.
- Teachers do not always plan work that is at the right level of difficulty for all groups of pupils.
- Pupils are too dependent on teachers and do not have enough opportunities to find things out or solve problems for themselves.
- When monitoring lessons, leaders do not focus sufficiently on the progress pupils are making.
- Some teachers responsible for subjects are at the early stages of developing their leadership skills.
- The speed at which the headteacher and her senior leaders are bringing about improvement has been reduced because vacancies at a senior level have yet to be filled.
- Although teachers generally manage behaviour well in lessons, older pupils feel that squabbles at lunch times are not always dealt with effectively.
- The school works hard to involve families in supporting their children's learning at home in order to accelerate progress, but with mixed success.

The school has the following strengths

- In 2012, attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 was higher than it has been for the last five years.
- There is strong commitment among the staff to do what is necessary to improve pupils' achievement.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team work effectively together and are determined to bring about improvement.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 26 lessons, including eight which were observed jointly with the headteacher or the two deputy headteachers. In addition, they observed the teaching of small groups of pupils receiving additional support for English and mathematics.
- Inspectors also heard pupils read, scrutinised work and observed pupils at play during their mid-morning and lunchtime breaks.
- Two meetings were held with randomly selected groups of pupils. In addition, informal opportunities were taken to talk with pupils.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of school documentation including: development plans; policies; self-evaluation reports; various monitoring files; safeguarding and curriculum materials; and the minutes of the governing body meetings.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, the office manager, class teachers, members of the governing body and the local authority.
- There were no responses to the on line questionnaire (Parent View) but inspectors spoke individually with several parents. The 28 responses to the questionnaire for school staff were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Sue Rath, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Linda Rowley	Additional Inspector
Dennis Brittain	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools. It is on a split site, straddling a main road, with the junior site on one side and the infant on the other.
- There are currently two classes in each year group from Year 1 to Year 6. The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of two part-time Nursery classes and two full-time Reception classes.
- Four fifths of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups and almost a third of pupils speak English as an additional language. These pupils are from a diversity of backgrounds, with the majority being of Black or Black British heritage. The percentage of ethnic minority groups has increased over the last three years.
- About a quarter of the pupils join or leave the school other than at the normal time. This is much higher than in most other schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The percentage of children for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for particular groups, including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average and has grown over the last three years.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average. The percentage who have a statement of special educational needs, or who are supported at school action plus, is average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress, and ensure that teaching and learning are consistently good or better, by:
 - ensuring that activities are at the right level of difficulty, taking account of what pupils have previously learnt
 - teachers checking pupils' progress and understanding during lessons and making the necessary adjustments in their plans to meet their needs
 - teachers planning more opportunities for pupil to work independently to explore learning for themselves.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - ensuring that any leadership team vacancies are filled
 - developing all staff so that they have the right skills to lead their area of the curriculum
 - ensuring that the checks made on the quality of teaching focus closely on the impact that teaching has on pupils' progress.
- Extend the school's partnership with parents and carers by:
 - providing additional information and guidance to support and help them to supplement their children's work
 - improve pupils' attendance and the continuity of their education by encouraging families to bring their children to school promptly and on a regular basis.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- The school has worked hard to make improvements since the last inspection. Recently, there has been a rise in achievement in reading, writing and mathematics and this is reflected in the improved results for pupils in Year 6 in the 2012 national tests. These pupils also made expected progress when compared with other pupils nationally. However, achievement requires improvement because pupils, including those who join the school other than at the usual time, are not making consistently good progress in all classes.
- In Years 1 to 6, progress is variable across year groups because of the differences in the quality of teaching. Pupils do not always build on skills as they move from one class to another and this is slowing the progress that they make.
- In a Year 6 class, pupils made good progress during a writing lesson. The teacher made it very clear what pupils were expected to learn, offered appropriate challenge and helped pupils to understand how to improve their work.
- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below those expected for their age. In 2012, children made good progress and at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage their attainment was the same as other children nationally. Several changes to staffing have resulted in weaker teaching and, at present, achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils at the school in mathematics. They make less progress in reading and writing. Their progress is tracked carefully, but the plans to support their learning do not outline clearly enough exactly what is needed to enable them to make good progress.
- Pupils who speak little or no English are given good individual support to help develop their communication skills. A dual-language teacher works very well with pupils who, with his support, make good progress in lessons.
- In the phonics check that tests pupils' understanding of the sounds that letter make, pupils' scores were below those found nationally in summer 2012. Pupils are now making better progress because of the new resources and recent training for teachers. Younger pupils are beginning to use the sounds that letters make to help them with their reading.
- Attainment in reading has improved and currently pupils are making broadly expected progress. The school promotes the love of books and pupils enjoy reading. Staff have had additional training to teach reading but this approach is not being delivered consistently and, as a result, progress is not good.
- In the summer 2012, test results showed that those pupils in Year 6 eligible for pupil premium funding were about one term behind other pupils in English and half a year in mathematics. The school is using the funding appropriately to provide additional resources to support these pupils. Compared with the previous year, in 2012 the gap in performance in mathematics narrowed and remained the same in English.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- Teachers have received a range of support to improve their teaching but weaknesses remain in some classrooms. Good teaching was seen during the inspection but the minority of weaker teaching is holding back the progress that the school can make. Senior leaders have provided intensive support and guidance for less effective teachers and this is beginning to improve the quality of their lessons.
- Work does not always match the individual needs of all pupils in the class and steps to success, which are used to help pupil to understand what they have to learn in a lesson, are often the same for all pupils.
- Checks are not kept on pupils throughout a lesson so that learning can be adapted as the session progresses. On occasions, pupils are engaged in activities that do not allow them to think problems through for themselves and they are too reliant on the teacher for support.
- In the best lessons, teachers use stimulating ideas which encourage pupils to succeed, learning moves quickly, misconceptions are corrected and pupils know how they can improve their work.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons. Relationships between pupils, teachers and other adults are good. Teaching assistants are mainly used to good effect to support small groups or individuals. Where this is less effective, pupils working in groups are unable to sustain their concentration once the support has moved to other pupils.
- Marking has improved and the school's policy is being implemented consistently across the school. Pupils understand the marking system and say that it helps them improve their work.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school and appreciate the support that teachers and other adults give them. In particular, they value the opportunity to complete their homework during an after-school homework club where resources and help are readily available.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**requires improvement**

- The reason why pupils' behaviour and safety requires improvement is because during the lunch break misbehaviour is not dealt with in the same effective way as during lesson time and the morning break.
- Until recently, the school has not tracked pupils' behaviour and therefore does not have a clear picture of the effectiveness of their systems for managing behaviour.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and friendly. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. The school is a welcoming and inclusive community. Adults provide a good lead in valuing the different heritages of all the school's pupils so that they learn to respect and value diversity. From the first time they start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils develop skills in working successfully with each other and adults.
- Most pupils said that they feel safe at school and that bullying is dealt with effectively. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and know how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together and recently there have been no racist

incidents recorded.

- The majority of parents who spoke to inspectors felt that the school provided a safe environment for their children and made sure that pupils were well behaved.
- Attendance is average. The school has worked hard to improve the attendance of a few pupils and this remains a challenge for the school. During the inspection, several pupils did not arrive promptly for the start of the school day.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The leadership and management of the school are not yet good because the quality of teaching and overall achievement is not good.
- The headteacher and two deputy headteachers work effectively together and have complementary skills. They are well supported by two senior leaders who share their vision for improvement. Two further vacancies exist in the leadership team but the school has not been able to secure these appointments. Many teachers with responsibility for subjects have not had enough opportunity to develop their leadership skills
- Members of the leadership team regularly observe lessons, look at teachers' planning and work in books. While these activities focus on improving what teachers are doing in lessons, they are not looking in sufficient detail at how teachers can accelerate the progress pupils make in lessons.
- The headteacher and other leaders are tackling weaknesses in teaching, and a range of support is being provided to help teachers to improve. The management of teachers' performance is bringing about improvement.
- The curriculum is engaging and mostly meets the needs of all pupils. They all have opportunities to make visits which give first-hand experiences related to learning in class. Themed days are used to enliven the curriculum and enable pupils to work across year groups and classes.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are given opportunities to consider their experiences and express their feelings and beliefs. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils showed excellent empathy when reflecting on Jesus' betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- The school provides opportunities for parents to learn about how to support their children at home but these are often not well attended.
- The local authority has provided useful support for the school. It has undertaken monitoring visits to review teaching and learning and has provided the school with help from an experienced headteacher from an outstanding school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a clear committee structure in place and each governor is linked to an area of the school. They visit the school regularly to examine data and meet with senior leaders. Governors are well informed and know the school strengths and areas for development. Over the past two years, governors have been actively involved in supporting the school to develop

further. Along with the headteacher, they play a full role in performance management, have linked this to pay progression and have an understanding of the quality of teaching across the school. The governors take safeguarding seriously. The relevant committee keeps a close check on the school's financial position and that resources are used well. Governors have ensured that the school uses the additional funding it receives from the government for particular groups, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, wisely.

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	103442
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	400038

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	410
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Gospel
Headteacher	Veronica Fenlon
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2011
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