

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

East Meadway, Tile Cross, Birmingham, B33 0AU

Inspection dates 19–20 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- The quality of teaching is not good enough to make sure all groups of pupils make good progress during their time in the school.
- Some groups – particularly boys and those supported by the pupil premium – are not making fast enough progress to catch up with their classmates.
- Some lessons do not have sufficient pace to sustain all pupils' interest, or to make the most able pupils think hard.
- Adults working in the Reception class do not consistently develop the children's language and literacy skills through activities that the children choose themselves.
- Pupils' work is not always marked in a way that shows clearly how it can be improved.
- Governors and leaders have not done enough, since the last inspection, to improve the quality of teaching and ensure that all pupils achieve well.
- The checks leaders make on the quality of teaching do not focus sharply on the impact it has on pupils' learning or the progress made by different groups.
- Although teachers who have extra responsibilities have been encouraged by the interim headteacher to play a larger role in improving the school, they are not yet having an impact on raising the quality of teaching.
- The school has not used pupil premium funding well enough to accelerate the progress of eligible pupils, or checked to make sure it has had the intended impact.

The school has the following strengths

- This year standards in writing at the end of Year 6 rose to above average.
- Pupils are polite, behave well, and say that they feel safe.
- The interim headteacher has quickly identified where improvements are needed. She has set a clear direction for improvement and gained the full support of the staff.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 14 lessons and, in addition, made a number of short visits to lessons. They spoke with pupils in lessons and at playtime, and held a meeting with a group of older pupils.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's plans for improvement, and policies about keeping pupils safe. They also examined the work in pupils' books, and a range of data about their progress.
- The inspectors held discussions with teachers, the headteacher and four members of the governing body.
- Too few parents responded to the Parent View website to allow inspectors to analyse their views. However, they did gather the views of parents through discussions at the start of the school day. The inspectors also considered the views expressed in questionnaires returned by members of staff.

Inspection team

Christopher Parker, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michael Appleby

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a little smaller than the average primary school.
- About half of the pupils are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, and three in every 10 pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action (pupils who need extra help with their learning) is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus, or who have a statement of special educational needs, is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is higher than the national average. In this school, the funding supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from families with a parent in the armed services.
- The school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The interim headteacher has been in post since in September 2013. For the previous year the deputy had been acting headteacher.
- There have been some changes to the teaching staff since the school was last inspected.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that pupils – particularly boys and those supported by the pupil premium – make faster progress and reach higher standards by:
 - taking every opportunity in Reception to develop the children's communication, language and literacy skills
 - injecting greater pace and excitement into lessons to sustain the interest of both girls and boys
 - making sure that the most able pupils are always made to think hard in lessons
 - better organising how groups of pupils are taught, so that time and teaching assistants are used to full effect throughout lessons
 - always marking pupils' work in a way that highlights how it can be improved, and consistently encouraging pupils to use this guidance to improve their work.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - focusing checks on the quality of teaching sharply on the impact it has on the learning and progress of different groups
 - extending the influence of subject leaders so that they can improve the quality of teaching
 - targeting the use of pupil premium funds more precisely, so as to accelerate the progress of the pupils they are intended to support
 - frequently checking that the use of pupil premium funds are having an impact on the standards attained by eligible pupils.
- Undertake an external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school's use of the pupil premium, in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Most pupils are making the progress expected nationally for their age, but too few boys, and too few of those pupils supported by the pupil premium, are making progress at a faster rate. Consequently, the gaps in attainment between boys and girls, and between those supported by the pupil premium and their classmates, are not closing quickly enough.
- The 2013 Year 6 national test results show a marked difference in attainment between pupils supported by the pupil premium and their classmates. They were on average a year behind in writing and 18 months behind in reading and mathematics. In some lessons, work is not sufficiently modified or tailored to accelerate their progress. Some of the funds made available have been used to improve support and resources, but not always specifically for these pupils. Consequently, throughout the school they are not making sufficiently fast progress to catch up.
- Although boys and girls make similar progress, there was a considerable difference in their 2013 Year 6 results. In reading, grammar, spelling and punctuation, and mathematics, girls reached higher standards than girls nationally, whereas boys attained below boys nationally.
- The most able pupils are not making the progress they could be. In 2013, all of the pupils who scored highly when they were in Year 2 did so in Year 6 in reading and writing. However, not all of those who scored highly in mathematics in Year 2 did so in Year 6. The school did not challenge these pupils to take tests at the highest level.
- The children start school in the Reception Year with skills that are less well developed than those expected for their age, and make progress that requires improvement. In 2013 many reached a good level of development in preparation for Year 1. However, none of the children exceeded the expected level last year, except in their personal development.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also requires improvement. Some pupils are benefiting from the individual and small-group support they receive. However, others are not making as much progress as they could in lessons where support does not consistently meet their individual needs.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The teaching is not strong enough to ensure that all groups of pupils make sufficiently fast progress to reach the standards they are capable of. In some lessons not enough consideration is given to modifying learning for different groups. As a result, pupils' learning does not always build rapidly enough on what they already know and are able to do.
- The marking of pupils' writing is inconsistent. Their work shows that the guidance pupils receive on how to improve their work is getting better. However, pupils are not yet responding to their teacher's guidance, and therefore its impact is lost. Improvements in marking in English are not as evident in other subjects.
- In some lessons, the work that pupils are set is not challenging or interesting enough to motivate all groups of pupils to work hard for the amount of time allocated by the teacher. As a result, some pupils – often boys – begin to lose concentration, become increasingly less productive and do not complete their work.

- The teaching of the youngest children requires improvement. Adults do not always step in quickly enough to extend the children's learning or to develop conversations that are taking place. Sometimes, learning is much better – for example, when the teacher led the children in a singing activity where they were changing the pitch of their voices.
- The teaching of the sounds that letters make is not yet consistently good, but it is increasingly systematic. This is why more pupils in Year 1 are currently on track to do well in the national phonics screening check. Over the last two years results have been close to the average. Most pupils are able to use their knowledge of the sounds that letters make to read unfamiliar words.
- Where the teacher is very clear about what is expected of the pupils, uses stimulating material, and demonstrates how they can be successful, the pupils make good progress. This was the case where Year 6 pupils were shown a silent film in order to get them to think about how they could introduce a dilemma into the story they were writing.
- Teaching assistants frequently support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Some of this support is very effective, because they question and probe to extend the pupils' learning. At other times, teaching assistants are asked to lead groups in tasks that are determined by the whole-class activity rather than what these pupils need to learn next.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are not consistently good. Some pupils – often boys – do not persevere for long enough to complete some tasks. Sometimes pupils work hard for the first part of the lesson but when they are not fully engaged by the task, their concentration then wanes, they begin to lose interest, and their learning slows.
- Some areas of the school building do not provide pupils with stimulating surroundings. Many of the teachers construct colourful displays to create interest. The Reception classroom now has new furniture and some new resources, but in other classes some of the resources do not motivate pupils.
- The pupils are polite and for the most part respond quickly to their teacher's instructions. Many pupils, although not yet all, have responded very positively to the interim headteacher's drive to improve handwriting and presentation. The work in the pupils' books shows that most now present their work carefully and neatly.
- The pupils behave well at lunchtimes and playtimes. Pupils say that they feel safe at school. They know about bullying and what to do if it should occur. Pupils are confident about turning to their teachers if they are concerned or feel unhappy. Older pupils say they enjoy school life, and particularly value the visits they make to places of interest.
- Attendance is broadly average. The school has well-established systems for following up absences, particularly those that are unexplained. A weekly competition for the class with the best attendance, and frequent reminders in the school newsletter, ensure that the whole school community values regular attendance.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Senior leaders and other teachers who are responsible for leading aspects of the school regularly

check the quality of teaching. While these observations maintain the quality of teaching, they are not incisive enough to help teachers to have a greater impact on their pupils' progress. This is because lesson observations do not have a sufficiently sharp focus on the learning and progress of different groups of pupils.

- The school has not carried out any searching evaluation of the impact of pupil premium funds. Some of the money has been used to enhance the social and personal development of these pupils, while some has been spent on teaching and resources that have benefited all pupils. However, it has not been spent carefully enough on helping eligible pupils to make faster progress so they can attain as highly as their classmates.
- The school has not received support from the local authority for some time. Consequently, the authority does not influence the school's work. The school is buying in the services of consultants, for example to help to improve the teaching in Reception. Other consultants have worked with governors and leaders to evaluate the school's performance.
- Leaders track the progress of all groups of pupils, and meet to discuss their progress. However, the resulting information is not being used well enough to quickly identify pupils who need to make faster progress. The interim headteacher has reviewed the way teachers' performance is managed. She has set all of the teachers more demanding targets for pupils' progress.
- The interim headteacher has galvanised senior leaders and provided a clear direction and high aspirations, which the staff and governors welcome and value. She has very quickly raised expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation, and this has generated a greater pride among most pupils in the quality of the work they produce.
- The curriculum supports the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, but is not modified well enough for individual needs to make sure all groups make rapid progress. Pupils value the broad range of clubs and activities they can join. A breakfast club has recently opened, and this is providing a positive start to the day for those who attend.
- The school has an action plan which sets out the priorities to be supported by the Primary School Sports Premium. Sports coaches are working alongside class teachers to show them how to organise and manage physical education (PE) lessons effectively. This was the case in a Year 4 PE lesson where pupils successfully practised a range of rolls and balances.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Changes of leadership and personnel have meant that the governing body has not held the school to account robustly enough in the recent past. Governors have to some degree been preoccupied by the difficulties they have faced in recruiting a permanent headteacher. Several vacancies for governors have recently been filled.
 - Governors have been involved in the decisions taken about the spending of the pupil premium, but they have not asked about the impact it has had on the progress of the pupils it is allocated to support.
 - Governors have been involved in changing the way staff performance is checked. They know that this is up to date for all staff, and only agree to a pay rise where it is warranted.
 - Governors recently received training in how to make effective use of data about the performance of pupils. Some governors also recently joined senior leaders and consultants to observe the quality of teaching. More training is planned for the governors.

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	103449
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	433184

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paula Conlon-Swain
Headteacher	Mary Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2011
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