

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Poole

Devon Road, Poole, Dorset BH15 3QQ

## Inspection dates

11–12 October 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- There has been a decline in standards in reading, writing and mathematics over time which has not yet been fully overcome.
- Leaders' views on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are overgenerous. Insufficient attention is paid to the impact teaching that has on the progress pupils make.
- Governors do not have a clear understanding of the school's performance or the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The decline in standards has not been challenged by trustees of the multi-academy trust.
- Teaching is not consistently good across all classes and in all subjects.
- Learning activities planned by teachers do not sufficiently challenge pupils, especially the most able, to achieve the very highest standards. This results in the most able pupils not making the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise and develop their skills in writing and mathematics in other subjects and thus attain higher standards.
- Not all teachers consistently follow the school's marking policy. Consequently, some pupils do not understand what they need to do to improve their learning.
- At times teaching assistants are not well deployed to support pupils to achieve.

### The school has the following strengths

- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite, courteous and well-mannered, respecting each other and adults.
- Children get a good start to their education in the early years as a result of high-quality provision.
- Differences are diminishing in reading, writing and mathematics for the few disadvantaged pupils.

## Full report

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

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning remains a priority to enable the proportion of pupils making good or better progress to quickly increase, especially in writing and mathematics
  - senior and middle leaders' monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning includes a clear focus on the impact it has on outcomes for different groups of pupils
  - development plans accurately identify what needs to improve and who will check whether the actions taken have been successful in improving outcomes
  - governors have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, enabling them to carry out their roles and responsibilities to quickly improve the quality of education pupils receive.
- Improve pupils' outcomes by ensuring that:
  - teachers raise their expectations of what pupils are able to achieve, especially in writing and mathematics
  - the most able pupils are given learning activities that inspire, excite and challenge them to think more deeply
  - teaching assistants are fully utilised to increase the effectiveness of their work.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Turbulence in leadership has resulted in an overall decline in pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics since 2013 at key stage 1 and 2. While current leaders have halted this decline, they understand that the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes need to continue to improve to secure a good quality of education for all.
- Leaders, including governors, have an overgenerous view of the school's effectiveness, including the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Monitoring does not focus sufficiently on the impact teaching has on pupil achievement, especially the achievement of groups of pupils.
- Plymouth CAST (the trust) has not played an effective role in halting the decline in standards. Trust leaders do not have an accurate understanding of the effectiveness of the school. Consequently, trustees are not holding the school to account well enough.
- The school's current plan for improvement lists many actions to be taken. However, it does not identify precisely enough the priorities leaders need to take in order to quickly improve pupils' achievement. Timescales for monitoring and evaluating the impact of actions taken are not clear. Consequently, it is difficult for those monitoring the success of the plan to check whether planned actions are successful in raising standards.
- Procedures to check the performance of staff are in place. However, targets are not focused sufficiently on what improvements leaders expect to see in pupils' outcomes, especially for the most able pupils.
- Additional funding for the few disadvantaged pupils has started to have a positive effect on their progress. As a result, differences are diminishing in reading, writing and mathematics, and leaders are right in seeking ways to ensure that such improvements are sustained.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is helping to secure better progress against their starting points. Planned support for this group of pupils is precisely targeted and funded.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders are working effectively to provide a curriculum that excites, motivates and inspires pupils in their learning. Leaders are striving to provide pupils with experiences which will effectively provide them with the skills necessary for their future.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is well developed through the curriculum. Pupils have a good understanding of people from different countries, cultures and beliefs. Pupils are very aware of the increasingly diverse community within their school and show respect for each other.
- Pupils' understanding of British values is effectively developed. For example, they understand democracy through the school council elections. They explain clearly how, like parliament, they are required to write their manifestos and present them to their class prior to elections taking place.
- Leaders make effective use of the additional funding for physical education and sport. Pupils have access to a good range of opportunities, for example fencing and gym club.

- The school works with other schools within the trust and beyond. For example, the school has recently started to work with Springhill Primary School in Southampton to provide support for newly qualified teachers. However, it is too early to see the impact of this support.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have not recognised the decline in standards which triggered this inspection. They have an inflated view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school and the impact this has on pupil outcomes. While there is evidence that governors have an understanding of school information and ask challenging questions about pupil performance, this is not rigorous enough in ensuring that the school provides a good standard of education.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Record-keeping is well maintained and meets all current statutory requirements. Staff receive regular and high-quality safeguarding training so that a clear culture of safeguarding practice permeates across the school. Staff are well informed of all types of risk to pupils, including radicalisation and extremism. They are confident in the action to take should they have any concerns about the safety or care of pupils. Staff and governors have a clear understanding of the need to protect pupils from all potential risks.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Requires improvement**

- Teaching is not yet having sufficient impact on the progress that groups of pupils are making. This is especially so for the most able pupils, particularly those most able who are disadvantaged. As a result, these pupils are not sufficiently well challenged and do not make the good progress that they should. When leaders visit classes or monitor work in books, they do not focus on how well these groups of pupils are learning or give specific guidance on how to develop teachers' practice to better meet the needs of these pupils.
- Pupils' books show inconsistencies in teachers' expectations, especially in writing and mathematics. There are differences between classes and across subjects. For example, the most able pupils show their true potential in some pieces of work, but this is not sustained over time to allow them to make the best possible progress. However, there are some examples of some high-quality work, such as pupils' persuasive writing about the importance of stopping deforestation in Brazil.
- When teachers check pupils' work, they do not at times pick up on mistakes and misconceptions. For example, when pupils do not form their letters correctly or spell accurately this is not being tackled quickly enough by teachers. Consequently, some pupils continue to make the same mistakes in their work.
- Teachers know which pupils need to catch up, especially those who have special educational needs and disabilities. Leaders have improved the school's provision and teachers have a much better understanding of these pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils are now receiving targeted help. While there are signs that pupils are moving ahead more rapidly, for example in their reading, it is too early to see the impact of this work in published outcomes.

- The teaching of phonics is securing better progress for pupils and this is reflected in the recent improvement in the Year 1 phonics check. Nevertheless, the 2016 outcomes remain below the national average. This is because inconsistencies remain in the quality of phonics teaching and pupils' mistakes are not always identified by teachers to secure good progress in reading.
- Teaching assistants do not always capture opportunities to promote and support effective learning for pupils. Where there is effective practice, teaching assistants have a good understanding of the needs of the pupils, contribute effectively and make a clear difference to pupils' success in lessons. For example, pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported by teaching assistants, enabling them to make strides in their speaking skills and understanding of English. There are, however, occasions when teaching assistants are not sufficiently involved in supporting the achievement of pupils during lessons.
- The school tracks and records pupils' achievement and progress. However, this information is not yet being consistently used to ensure that pupils are making the best possible progress in reading, writing or mathematics.
- Teaching is improving as a result of recent changes in the senior leadership team and there is evidence that achievement is rising, for example in the early years provision.
- Increased monitoring, training and guidance by leaders are having a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching. There is evidence of some strong practice developing, for example teachers' strong subject knowledge and probing questioning to challenge pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding. Nevertheless, this has not been the case for long enough to have made a significant impact on pupil progress. Consequently, teaching is not yet securely good.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's core values, which include respect, love, creativity and spirituality, shine through all aspects of the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. These positive relationships are built on trust and mutual respect. Pupils explained to inspectors how, 'We need to respect to be respected.'
- Pupils describe how they feel safe. This is as a result of the school providing them with a range of activities which teach them how to keep safe. For example, older pupils demonstrate good knowledge on internet safety and the importance of not sharing personal information.
- Pupils' attendance has been below average but is improving and is currently above the national average. Leaders make every effort to encourage good attendance when any pupil's attendance drops to below those levels that are acceptable.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have a good understanding of what is acceptable behaviour and clearly know the differences between right and wrong.
- Staff are positive role models for pupils. As a result, pupils are extremely well-

mannered and courteous to adults and each other. Pupils explain how they welcome the role of peer mediators to support pupils who find aspects of school more challenging.

- Pupils behave well around the school. This includes during playtimes and lunchtimes. Lunchtime supervisors described how delightful the pupils are, speaking positively about their good behaviour and their high levels of respect. Consequently, playtimes and lunchtimes are typically enjoyable occasions where pupils play happily together.
- Pupils are fully aware of the different forms of bullying. They told inspectors that incidents of bullying and racism are extremely rare. They are confident that if there were any incidents, staff act would quickly to effectively resolve them. Pupils report that they do not hear any derogatory language and this was the experience of inspectors.
- On occasions there are times when pupils are not sufficiently motivated or challenged with their work. When this happens, some low-level disruption occurs. This results in the pupils' rates of progress slowing and consequently they do not achieve as well as they should.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes have declined since 2013 at key stage 1 and 2. However, as a result of current leaders' actions to reverse this underachievement, progress is now improving. School leaders are working hard to eradicate underachievement by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, as seen in the published data, and to challenge the uneven rates of progress across year groups in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The number of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has risen in 2016 after a three-year decline. Nevertheless, outcomes remain below national averages. While leaders have improved the teaching of phonics and reading, more work remains to be completed in order to raise standards further.
- Pupils typically enjoy reading. Older pupils are able to talk knowledgeably about preferred authors and genres. The school effectively supports those pupils who require additional support with their reading through targeted interventions. While there are improvements in current reading outcomes overall, published information for Year 2 and Year 6 in 2015 does not reflect this. Recently published information for 2016 shows these overall improvements; however, too few pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils do not make good enough progress in their writing. Current workbooks, along with some viewed from the previous school year, show that pupils are not able to use their knowledge and skills in writing well enough to write at length in English or across other subjects.
- Published data of 2015 showed pupils were not making good progress in mathematics. While the most recent progress information shows more pupils reaching the expected standard, their progress is hampered because at times they do not fully apply their knowledge of mathematics when faced with problem-solving and reasoning activities. From their starting points too many pupils do not make consistently good progress in mathematics.

- The most able pupils are not achieving well enough, including those who are also disadvantaged. Not enough pupils are making the best possible progress in reading, writing or mathematics. This is because teaching is not sufficiently challenging, with activities planned to precisely meet the needs of these pupils. For example, in mathematics pupils spend too long on the same activity that they already know, can do and understand. There is not sufficient opportunity for pupils to work at greater depth.
- The few pupils who are eligible for pupil premium are now making stronger progress. Differences in achievement are diminishing and in some subjects this group achieve better than their peers. This is as a result of targeted interventions that are better meeting their needs.
- Pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities are making strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics given their starting points. Early identification ensures that interventions are quickly and carefully planned to ensure that they meet the needs of these pupils.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- The leader for early years demonstrates a determination for constant improvement. She carefully analyses assessment information to check how well children are doing. From her analysis she works with staff to ensure that planned provision effectively meets the needs of children.
- Children enter early years with skills which are just below typical for their age, particularly in writing and social development. As a result of good teaching, children make good progress. By the time they leave the early years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is above the national average. With the exception of a dip in 2014, outcomes are rising year on year, ensuring that children are well prepared as they enter Year 1.
- Children are effectively developing their early reading, writing and number skills. For example, a group of boys and girls were engrossed in making books. They were able to accurately write their names using their knowledge of phonics, with accurate letter formation and correct pencil grip.
- Children are provided with a range of learning opportunities which stimulate their creativity. For example, children were absorbed in the making of their rockets. They talked confidently about how they made their rockets and the journey they would be taking in them.
- Although the most able children do make good progress, not enough of them exceed the early learning goals at the end of Reception. This is because activities planned do not sufficiently challenge these children, especially in their mathematics and writing, to further deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Relationships between staff and children are strong. This enables children to thrive and develop in an environment where they feel safe and nurtured.
- Behaviour in the early years is good. Routines have quickly been established and are consistently applied by staff. The safety of children is good. Staff are appropriately trained in all aspects of keeping children safe. They monitor children carefully and know how to report concerns if they arise.

- Parents spoken to by inspectors were delighted with the transition arrangements for their children when starting school. As a result, children settle quickly into school life, grow in confidence and make good progress in developing the skills they need to become successful learners.

## School details

Unique reference number	140777
Local authority	Poole
Inspection number	10020052

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. This inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	418
Appropriate authority	academy trust
Chair	Matt Desmier
Headteacher	Helen Armstrong
Telephone number	01202 676207
Website	<a href="http://www.st-marys.poole.sch.uk">www.st-marys.poole.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@st-marys.poole.sch.uk">office@st-marys.poole.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- St Mary's Catholic Primary School is much larger than the average-sized primary school and is part of the Plymouth CAST. The school became an academy on 1 April 2014. When its predecessor school, St Mary's Catholic Combined School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school joined the Trust and became an academy on 1 April 2014. When its predecessor school, St Mary's Catholic Combined School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- At the time the school was notified of the inspection it did not comply with Department for Education guidance to provide details of the academy trust's scheme of delegation for governance functions on its website.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is well below the national average. This is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below the national average.
- The majority of pupils are White British and most pupils speak English as their first language.
- Almost a quarter of pupils speak English as an additional language, a higher proportion than is average nationally.
- In the early years provision, children in Reception are taught in two classes and attend full time.
- The school has a breakfast club that is managed by the governing body.
- The school receives support from Springhill Primary School in Southampton.
- The school met the current government floor standards for 2015, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons or part lessons, some of which were joint observations with leaders.
- Meetings were held with leaders, staff, governors and the east area adviser from Plymouth CAST multi-academy trust. A phone call was held with the independent school improvement partner.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised during the inspection, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and data relating to pupils' attainment and progress. Inspectors also checked the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements and attendance information.
- The inspection team scrutinised the quality of pupils' work over time.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils to seek their views about the school. The views of other pupils were gathered during lessons, playtimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the start of the day. Correspondence received from parents was also considered.

## Inspection team

Jen Southall, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lizzy Meadows	Ofsted Inspector
Heather Barraclough	Ofsted Inspector
Fiona Allen	Ofsted Inspector
Stewart Gale	Her Majesty's Inspector

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