

St Catherine's Catholic Primary School, Wimborne

Cutlers Place, Colehill, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 2HN

Inspection dates

13–14 March 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- The safeguarding of pupils is ineffective. Leaders do not take appropriate action to ensure pupils' welfare and safety.
- Leaders and governors have not been successful in halting the decline in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Pupils with previously low attainment do not receive the support they need to become competent readers and writers.
- Trust leaders' actions have failed to resolve the widespread failings of school leadership.
- The headteacher has failed to provide middle leaders and teachers with the guidance or support they need. Staff morale is low.
- Leaders fail to deploy funding effectively. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not supported well.
- The school's curriculum does not prepare pupils well for their future lives. Pupils make poor progress in a range of subjects. They also have a limited knowledge of other cultures and religions.
- Teaching is inadequate. It is particularly weak in Years 1 and 3, where some pupils' progress slows. Teachers' expectations of pupils are too low, and their subject knowledge is limited.
- Children in the Nursery are ill-prepared for Reception. Adults who work with these children do not support their good development.
- In some year groups, pupils' low-level disruption hinders learning. Teachers do not motivate pupils to do their best.
- A third of parents report a lack of faith in school leaders.

The school has the following strengths

- Recent action taken by trust leaders has led to improvements in the administration of safeguarding practices.
- Pupils' attendance is currently in line with the national average. Incidents of pupils' poor behaviour have reduced.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improving the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - securing an effective safeguarding culture
 - ensuring that leaders' checks on teaching are robust and that teachers act upon leaders' advice
 - making sure that governance provides robust challenge to leaders, in particular so that they can be confident that the expenditure of additional funding makes a difference to pupils' academic, physical and emotional development
 - ensuring that middle leaders receive the training and support they need to improve teachers' subject knowledge
 - improving the provision for disadvantaged pupils, lower attaining pupils and pupils with SEND, so that these pupils make good progress
 - ensuring that curriculum requirements are met, so that pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain
 - developing a curriculum fit for purpose so that teachers develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding sufficiently in the subjects they study, including English and mathematics
 - articulating high expectations and supporting teachers in making accurate assessments.
- Improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make good progress, by ensuring that:
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - teachers make good use of what they know pupils can do and understand to plan work that meets pupils' needs
 - teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Improve the quality of pupils' personal development and welfare urgently by ensuring that:
 - safeguarding arrangements minimise the risk of harm to pupils and support the most vulnerable pupils, so that they can achieve well
 - teaching motivates and interests pupils, so that pupils consistently apply their best effort to their learning.
- Improve the early years provision so that children make good progress by ensuring

that:

- the quality of the provision and teaching approaches used across Nursery and Reception classes are suitably strong
- staff receive training and guidance, so that adult interaction with children is effective in supporting children’s emotional and language development
- teaching in the early years is consistently good, and assessment is accurate across both the Nursery and Reception classes
- teachers plan purposeful activities that carefully build on and extend what children can do, know and understand.

An external review of governance and the school’s use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- The headteacher and other leaders have failed to halt the decline in the school's effectiveness in recent years.
- Leaders have failed to promote equality of opportunity for pupils and staff. Staff have not received the training required to strengthen their teaching. Consequently, pupils from different starting points have been deprived of the support they need.
- Relationships among some staff are fractious. They ignore school policies and do not respond to leaders' expectations. The headteacher has not done enough to tackle poor-quality teaching, learning and assessment practices and the poor conduct that some teachers exhibit.
- The school's curriculum is poorly designed and poorly taught. Leaders' challenge has failed to eradicate some teachers' 'pick and mix' approach to teaching aspects of the curriculum. Consequently, the taught curriculum fails to build and deepen the knowledge and skills of pupils of different ages.
- The curriculum does not prepare pupils for life in modern Britain well. In particular, teaching does not promote pupils' understanding of cultural diversity. Pupils lack the knowledge and understanding of different cultures and beliefs.
- Leaders fail to meet their statutory duties in supporting pupils with SEND. Allocated funding is not used well enough to support the pupils who need it. Leaders' expectations for these pupils are low. They fail to identify the barriers to learning accurately and do not support teachers with the necessary guidance to help pupils to make progress.
- Leaders have allocated roles and responsibilities to middle leaders without ensuring they have the necessary expertise. Senior leaders have failed to provide the training or support which middle leaders need to carry out these roles effectively. Consequently, the guidance middle leaders provide to teachers is often weak and does not lead to improvements.
- Leaders' plans for, and analysis of, pupil premium funding expenditure are not fit for purpose. The school has received £28,000 this year, but leaders have not identified the barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils face. Consequently, the money is not directed into strategies to help pupils overcome these hurdles. Therefore, leaders have failed to enable disadvantaged pupils to make rapid progress in their learning. However, the early years leader is aware of children who are in receipt of additional funding and does make sure that any barriers to their learning are tackled in this part of the school.
- Leaders do not evaluate the impact of the sports premium funding effectively. Although pupils benefit from specialist teaching, leaders have no oversight of this work. However, after consultation with parents, leaders have reviewed and increased the range of clubs available this academic year.
- A third of the parents and carers who responded to Parent View raised concerns about the leadership of the school. However, some parents did praise the improvements in

the quality and frequency of communication between home and school over the past few weeks.

- Leaders' actions to improve teaching and pupils' achievement have been piecemeal and have not been sustained. In the last 12 months, trust leaders have provided the headteacher with a comprehensive package of advice and support. However, this guidance has made little difference beyond an improvement in communication with parents and, more recently, a greater compliance with safeguarding legislation and the management of pupils' behaviour.
- It is recommended that the school should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- Over time, the local governing board has not been successful in halting the decline in the school's performance. Local governors are committed to the school and make regular visits to check on the school's effectiveness. They routinely ask leaders questions about how well the school is performing. However, governors have not pursued issues in the depth and detail required to evaluate the impact that their policies are having on pupils' attainment and progress.
- In recent months, Plymouth CAST has reduced the extent of the local governing board's accountability. Even with this reduced role, the board are ineffective in providing necessary challenge.
- Governance has failed to fulfil its statutory duties. It has not ensured that safeguarding policies, practices and procedures are effective in keeping pupils safe from potential harm.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Following the trust leaders' safeguarding audit in February 2019, school leaders have successfully tackled some administrative aspects of safeguarding compliance. However, the school's safeguarding culture remains weak.
- Although senior leaders document safeguarding incidents, these records do not show clearly what actions leaders have taken in response to the concerns raised. Records of serious behaviour incidents lack detail about what actions staff have taken to ensure pupils' safety and welfare. This means that leaders are not able to evaluate whether the actions they have taken have been effective.
- The headteacher has failed to check that teachers' risk assessments for school trips and visits out of school are suitably robust. Consequently, pupils' safety is at risk.
- The induction of newly appointed staff does not furnish staff with all of the information they need to keep pupils safe. When staff sign to say they have read necessary documents, leaders fail to make checks to ensure that staff understand and comply with school policy.
- Although leaders have engaged the support of external services to support families, leaders have not ensured that advice is followed. Consequently, pupils do not receive

the support they need in a timely manner.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teaching does not meet the needs of pupils well enough. Pupils have considerable gaps in their knowledge, understanding and skills. This restricts the progress that pupils make and prevents some from being ready for the next stage in their education.
- The majority of teaching is characterised by teachers' poor use of assessment and weak subject knowledge, resulting in work being too easy or too hard for pupils. This goes unchecked and unchallenged by leaders and so pupils' underachievement continues.
- There are significant weaknesses, such as serious failings in a few classes and in particular, in Years 1 and 3. Pupils who were already not achieving well enough have fallen further behind. The legacy of poor teaching is too significant. Consequently, the better teaching that exists in Years 4 to 6 does not help pupils to catch up well enough.
- Teaching does not address the needs of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. The process of identifying needs has been at best slow, and at worst non-existent, primarily as a result of inadequate leadership.
- The teaching of mathematics is weak. Teachers do not provide pupils with well-matched activities to improve their fluency of number knowledge or to develop their ability to reason confidently and accurately.
- The teaching of writing is heavily focused on developing pupils' vocabulary and is mainly effective in this aspect. However, the legacy of the weak teaching of phonics is reflected in pupils' writing, which is marred by repeated spelling and punctuation errors.
- Historically, the teaching of phonics in the early years and in key stage 1 has not been effective. Despite outcomes that are higher than those seen nationally, pupils are unable to spell words for their age accurately. More recently, teachers have begun to adopt a new approach to the teaching of phonics. However, teachers have not had the necessary training to teach phonics competently. Gaps in their subject knowledge remain. Consequently, progress in phonics is piecemeal.
- The teaching of reading has led to some high attainment in the past. However, those pupils who struggle with reading do not get the support they need to catch up. The most able pupils in key stage 2 regularly reach the higher standards in reading as a result of stronger teaching in Years 4 to 6.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. Until recently, trust leaders have not been stringent in ensuring that school leaders and staff follow trust policies.
- Teaching does not prepare pupils to be successful learners or enable them to show the necessary determination in their learning. Pupils are not given the support or guidance to know when they are doing well or to know where to improve.
- Pupils do not have full confidence that, when they raise concerns, some staff will listen or resolve issues quickly. Over a third of parents who responded to the online questionnaire expressed concerns about leaders' management of behaviour.
- The school does not ensure equality of opportunity. Pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils are not provided for adequately. In addition, some pupils report that they are treated unfairly. This was reported in the trust's school leadership review in the summer term of 2018 and remains unresolved.
- The school's curriculum fails to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultures and religions other than that of the Roman Catholic tradition of the Christian faith.
- Although pupils are supported to develop their physical health, the school's personal, social and health education curriculum fails to provide pupils with the skills they need to manage their feelings and friendships. However, recent improvements to, and implementation of, the school's behaviour policy have led to a reduction in incidents of poor behaviour.
- Pupils talk with confidence about how to keep safe on the internet.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Many pupils are compliant but do not engage enthusiastically in their work because it is either too easy or too hard. Teachers are slow to recognise this. Consequently, this limits pupils' progress over time.
- Pupils' attendance has improved recently to be in line with the national average. Leaders' actions to tackle persistent absenteeism have also been effective.
- Low-level disruption still occurs in some classes. However, pupils' behaviour and conduct have improved in recent months. Incidents of poor behaviour have reduced.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils' underachievement is prevalent across the school. Current teaching does not support pupils who have previously underachieved to catch up. In addition, pupils whose previous attainment was average, and the most able, make insufficient progress.

- Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND do not make the progress they should. Sometimes pupils cannot access learning because they are not given appropriate support or because the tasks teachers set are too difficult.
- Pupils with emotional needs are often left deprived of any support. Consequently, they make poor progress. Some choose to withdraw and do not engage in their learning in class, and others create low-level disruption as a result of their frustration and unmet needs.
- Gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge have not been addressed quickly enough. Fewer pupils met the expected standard in the phonics screening check last year in Year 1 than the national average, and too few of the Year 2 pupils caught up. Older pupils continue to misspell common words and teachers do not address these errors routinely.
- Pupils are not adequately prepared for the next stage of their education. There has been a three-year decline in rates of pupils' progress in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6. In particular, too few previously average-attaining pupils make the progress they should.
- Pupils' attainment in Years 2 and 6 is generally at least in line with the national average. Historically, an above-national-average proportion reached the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, these standards are not reflected in current pupils' attainment across the school.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- The early years provision is inadequate.
- The shortcomings in safeguarding apply equally to the early years. Leaders have failed to provide staff with the training they need. Risk assessments for keeping children free from harm do not reach beyond an administrative exercise. However, leaders have responded to guidance from the local authority and now ensure that staffing ratios in the Nursery are compliant with legislation.
- The new leader of the early years has an accurate understanding of the weaknesses in the early years. Some staff have been resistant to change, which has slowed the pace of improvement. Furthermore, the early years leader has received little support from the headteacher in resolving these issues.
- There has been a decline in the proportion of children reaching a good level of development (the government's expectations of children by the end of the Reception Year). Assessments of children's development are sometimes overinflated at the end of Nursery. In particular, children's independence skills are underdeveloped.
- Over the last few years, there have been no disadvantaged pupils in the Reception class. There are a few now. Teachers in the Reception class ensure that these pupils receive effective additional support to overcome barriers to their learning.
- Teaching does not support the development of children's early writing skills sufficiently. Staff do not provide sufficient opportunities for children to develop their mark-making and fine and gross motor skills. Staff do not encourage children to use a correct pencil

grip.

- Adult interactions with children are too variable. Some adults listen to children and develop their vocabulary; adults explain intended learning to children and routinely question and extend children's thinking. However, other adults' interaction fails to support learning.
- Teachers' planning prioritises focused tasks where adults work with children. The quality of other tasks is inconsistent. Although a range of activities is provided, they sometimes lack purpose and do not routinely build on or extend what children know and can do.
- New approaches to the teaching of phonics are making a difference for current children in Reception. However, children do not apply their knowledge of phonics when writing.
- The early years leader's insistence on the teaching of early phonic skills in the Nursery is beginning to reap rewards in developing children's listening skills.
- Parents are positive about the provision in the early years. They say that their child enjoys school and that staff are approachable.

School details

Unique reference number	140756
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10086910

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	163
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Rt. Hon. Lord Burnett
Headteacher	Sarah Sparks
Telephone number	01202 883763
Website	http://www.stcatherinescolehill.dorset.sch.uk/
Email address	office@stcatherinescolehill.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Catherine's Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It is part of the Plymouth CAST multi-academy trust. The trust was formed on 1 April 2014. The work of the trust is overseen by a board of directors. The trust changed its scheme of delegation, in October 2018. The local governing board has no accountability. School leaders are accountable to the education and standards managers. The trust is responsible for one nursery, 32 primary schools and two secondary schools across seven local authorities in the south-west region.
- The school is of Catholic denomination and received a section 48 inspection in March 2018.
- The school admits children to the Nursery in the term they become three years old. The Nursery provision is referred to as 'kindergarten'.

- The school has one class per year group with the exception of Years 5 and 6, which comprise a mixed class.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors worked in close partnership with leaders to review the school's provision and pupils' progress over time.
- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in visits to lessons across the school and reviewed pupils' work in books.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils to seek their views about the school. Inspectors also listened to the views of many pupils during lessons, breaktimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors also considered the 50 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- An inspector listened to pupils read in Years 1, 2 and 3.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and conduct in lessons, at lunchtimes and breaktimes and around the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, and middle leaders in the school. Inspectors also met with representatives from the local governing body, the director for education and standards and the education and standards manager for Plymouth CAST.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of school documents including: the school's action plans, the school's view of its own performance, pupils' attainment and progress information, governors' minutes, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and a range of safeguarding records.
- Inspectors considered 123 responses to the online survey Parent View as well as 93 free-text responses from parents. Inspectors also talked to parents during the inspection to seek their views of the school and the education that their children receive. Inspectors met with a range of school staff to gather their views and considered 22 responses from the online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Tracy Hannon, lead inspector

Jen Edwards

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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