

St Catherine's Catholic Primary School

Highdown Drive, Littlehampton, BN17 6HL

Inspection dates 11–12 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This school is good because school leaders have ensured that teaching has strongly improved since the previous inspection. Pupils currently in the school make good progress in all subjects.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught well and make good progress.
- Pupils currently in Key Stage 1 are working at much higher levels than those in previous years when results were below average.
- Pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 remains high. Their attainment in writing, while lower, has strongly improved.
- Teaching has become consistently good across the school. Teachers use questioning well and give pupils clear advice about how to improve their work.
- Pupils are eager to learn and they behave well. The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is diligent, thorough and highly effective.
- The leadership of the school has significantly improved since the previous inspection. The headteacher, other leaders and governors all contribute well to school improvement. Leaders at all levels ensure that staff across the school have high expectations of pupils.
- The school has a very strong set of values. It promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development very effectively and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Pupils are not good enough at writing at length.
- Leaders and teachers do not record the progress made by different groups of pupils as thoroughly as they should or use of this information effectively to inform planning and teaching.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors saw teaching across the school. They observed one assembly, 11 lessons and pupils' behaviour in the playground and at lunchtime. Three lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with pupils, four members of the governing body, the headteacher and other members of staff.
- The inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work, including support for pupils who need extra help. They heard pupils read and examined pupils' work in their exercise books and on classroom and corridor wall displays.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents, including plans for what pupils will learn in each subject, plans for the school's future development and records of the school's use of primary school sports funding and the pupil premium. They also scrutinised the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe, pupils' attendance records, minutes of governing body meetings and records of the monitoring of pupils' learning and the quality of teaching.
- The views of parents and carers were taken into account by taking note of the 78 responses to the school's survey of parental views and through discussions with several parents and carers. The inspectors also considered the five responses to the online Parent View survey.
- Staff views were taken into consideration by looking at the eight returned questionnaires and through discussions with several members of staff.

Inspection team

Steven Popper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynne Thorogood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, is higher than the national average. This extra money is provided for children known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is about average. Some pupils have speech, language and communication needs, while others have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or other needs.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small minority of pupils, though a larger proportion than average, speak English as an additional language.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage attend one full-time Reception class.
- The deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2014. The English, mathematics and early years leaders took up their leadership responsibilities in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' writing by encouraging them to write longer pieces of work.
- Improve lesson planning and teaching by:
 - making more thorough records of the progress made by different groups of pupils
 - using this information more effectively to inform planning and teaching.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The quality of the school's leadership has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Leaders at all levels have high expectations of pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. Their effective actions have ensured that all the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been remedied and that teaching has strongly improved.
- The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is accurate. However, leaders' analysis of information about the progress of different groups of pupils, such as those who are most able, is not always sufficiently thorough. Because of this, teachers are not able to use information about how groups of pupils are doing to plan their teaching effectively.
- Middle leaders are much more effective than at the time of the previous inspection and their well-thought-out actions have contributed to the improved teaching in the school. Middle leaders, including the early years leader, have helped develop teachers' expertise in their areas of responsibility.
- Leaders at all levels ensure that the quality of teaching is good; there is now no weak teaching. Staff are given the support they need to develop their teaching and the management of teachers' performance is effective and robust.
- Pupils experience a wide variety of subjects. The school's deep-seated values are reflected in the school's aims and mission statement, and in all the education that pupils receive. Pupils learn about and develop respect for democracy, different faiths and cultures and British values and institutions. The school strongly promotes equal opportunities and works against discrimination. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school promotes pupils' social and cultural development well and ensures that pupils' spiritual and moral development is particularly strong. This was evident in some very moving, thoughtful and developed work on remembrance. It was also seen in the way teachers took opportunities to explore ethical issues during their lessons. For example, one Year 6 lesson on writing newspaper reports explored reasons why it was important for such reports to represent people's points of view fairly and accurately.
- The primary school sports funding is spent effectively on increasing pupils' engagement in physical education and sports, including less familiar sports such as curling. It is also used to develop teachers' expertise in teaching physical education. As a result, physical education teaching has improved, as has pupils' performance in competitive sports.
- Other additional funding is spent effectively on supporting eligible pupils' attendance and academic performance. As a result, high proportions of eligible pupils make better than expected progress and their attendance has improved.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and are of high quality. Staff and governors receive up-to-date training and ensure that all safeguarding work is diligent and carried out well.
- The local authority has supported the school well. It has given effective training to staff and governors.
- The school has developed good relationships with parents and carers and works with them well. As a result, most parents and carers who offered an opinion thought that the school is well led and would recommend it to others.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has strongly improved since the time of the previous inspection. Governors understand information about pupils' achievement and use it well to challenge school leaders. They systematically check that leaders are doing enough to ensure that teaching and achievement are good. The recruitment of staff to the school is well judged. Governors have high expectations and check that enough is expected of staff through the robust management of their performance. Governors make certain that staff are given the support they need in order to develop, but also challenge school leaders to ensure that any poor performance is addressed effectively. They check that school finances are spent well, including that which rewards good teaching. Governors contribute appropriately to the school development plan and their impact upon school improvement is good.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are keen to learn and they focus well during lessons. Their positive approach to learning has contributed to improvements in their progress.
- Low-level disruption is very uncommon. However, a few pupils can become distracted when they are given insufficiently challenging tasks to complete by themselves.
- Pupils are polite, cooperative and caring and behave well in all areas of the school. Older pupils look after younger ones at lunchtime and help them feel at ease.
- The school manages pupils' behaviour effectively. Pupils who talked to the inspectors understood the high expectations conveyed by the school's 'good conduct ladder'. They said that behaviour in the school was good and that any 'arguments and squabbles' would be suitably dealt with.
- The school ensures that pupils have a good understanding about different forms of bullying and poor behaviour, including cyber bullying and the use of derogatory language.
- School records show very few incidents of bullying or other forms of poor behaviour over time. No pupils have been excluded since July 2012.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- The school ensures that pupils are safe in all areas. Leaders carry out rigorous assessments of any possible risks to pupils at school and during school outings.
- The school teaches pupils how to keep safe very well, including when online and when using the road. Teachers help pupils develop their understanding of the dangers posed by drugs in an appropriate manner. Healthy eating is promoted well.
- Pupils who talked to the inspectors said that they felt safe and could turn to staff that they trusted if they had any worries.
- An overwhelming majority of parents and carers who offered an opinion thought that their children were safe and happy at school, and that the school managed their behaviour well.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has strongly improved since the school was last inspected. Teaching across the school has become consistently good, with the result that pupils' achievement has also improved.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and children in the early years. They use 'bronze, silver and gold challenges' to ensure that pupils aspire to do as well as they can. Teachers generally ensure that pupils, including the most-able, are stretched sufficiently in lessons, although occasionally the tasks given to pupils to complete by themselves are not challenging enough.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is effective overall, and the teaching of phonics (linking letters to the sounds they make) has particular improved. However, pupils are given too few opportunities to write at length.
- Teachers know their subjects well. They give pupils clear and accurate explanations that enable them to develop their knowledge and understanding in reading, writing, mathematics and other subjects. Teachers' questioning promotes pupils' careful thinking and helps cement their learning.
- Pupils and adults have good working relationships. Pupils follow instructions swiftly and listen carefully to the advice they receive.
- Teachers' marking has improved since the time of the last inspection. Teachers give pupils helpful and clear advice about how to improve their work. A consistent and effective approach to marking is now in place across the school.
- Teaching assistants effectively support disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, those eligible for additional funding and the most-able pupils.
- An overwhelming majority of parents and carers who offered an opinion thought that their children are taught well.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The achievement of pupils has improved since the time of the previous inspection. Most pupils currently in the school, including those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress from their starting points.
- The school's results in the national screening of phonics have strongly improved. The most recent phonics check scores are much higher than average.
- In the past, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 was low. However, pupils currently in Key Stage 1 are now working at much higher levels because of strong and secure improvements to teaching, especially in Year 1. Pupils' progress in all subjects in Year 1 has improved.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in reading and mathematics has remained higher than average and it improved further in 2014. Their attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in writing is lower, although it strongly improved last year and is now at the expected level.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in all subjects at the end of Key Stage 2 strongly improved in 2014 because of the good progress of the most-able pupils. The attainment of this group in reading, mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling at the end of Key Stage 2 is consistently above average.
- The attainment of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is lower than that of other pupils, both nationally and in the school. However, the progress made by these pupils has improved, especially in Key Stage 1, and is now good. The school is successfully reducing the gap between the achievement of these pupils and that of other pupils, particularly in reading. This is because the school identifies and responds effectively to the needs of individual pupils.
- The school is successfully narrowing the gap in attainment between pupils eligible for additional funding and other pupils in the school. Currently, eligible pupils are approximately two terms behind in reading and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2, but level in writing. Eligible pupils' results in all subjects at the end of Key Stage 2 are better than those of similar pupils in most other schools. They do better in reading and English grammar, punctuation and spelling at the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2 than other pupils nationally.
- Most parents and carers who offered an opinion thought that their children made good progress.

The early years provision is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skill and knowledge slightly below those typical for their age. They end the stage well prepared for learning in the rest of the school. The percentage of children finishing the Reception Year with a good level of development is much higher than average.
- Staff are caring and kind. They ensure that children feel at ease and are kept safe.
- The indoor and outdoor classrooms are well presented and used to promote learning effectively. Children engage in adult-led and independent activities well, and demonstrate high levels of concentration.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Teachers and teaching assistants communicate clearly to children in ways that excite their curiosity and deepen their understanding. However, some of the independent activities offered to children are not challenging enough.
- Children are friendly and behave considerately towards each other. Inspectors witnessed children sharing resources and cooperating well.
- Staff monitor children's achievements and needs accurately and regularly from the time they enrol. Early years staff communicate well with parents and carers through, for example, fortnightly newsletters and journals that record children's activities and achievements.
- The early years leader evaluates the impact of the provision carefully and thoroughly and makes suitable improvements. Her actions have increased the effectiveness of the outdoor classroom as a place to learn, for example. Good leadership is helping children to make consistently good progress.

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	126040
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	452227

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Liz Bedford
Headteacher	Gillian Askham
Date of previous school inspection	30–31 January 2013
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