

# St Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School

Horseshoe Lane, Garston, Watford, WD25 7HP

**Inspection dates** 11–12 November 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b> <b>2</b>
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The school benefits from the strong leadership of the headteacher. She is ably supported by senior leaders, governors and staff who are all committed to improving teaching and learning.
- Pupils make good progress. By the end of Key Stage 2, they reach standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils and plan lessons which capture pupils' interest and help them to make good progress. Teachers and support staff work well together to support learning.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. Work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. This is underpinned by a strong Catholic ethos.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding, both in lessons and around the school. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils are friendly, polite and welcoming.
- The work to keep pupils safe is also outstanding. Pupils feel safe at school. They look after each other and have confidence that adults and their friends will take care of them.
- Attendance is above average and this reflects how much pupils enjoy coming to school. As one pupil put it, 'coming to school is like coming home'.
- Teaching and learning in the Reception classes are not yet good enough because the relatively inexperienced staff need support from leaders to develop their skills in helping pupils to achieve what they are capable of.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not good enough to make achievement outstanding.
- Occasionally, some teachers do not plan work that provides enough challenge for pupils, particularly the most-able pupils.
- The knowledge and skills of middle leaders are still developing. They do not yet make a fully effective contribution to improving teaching and pupils' achievement. The leadership of the early years requires improvement.

### Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 26 lessons or parts of lessons, including one joint observation with the headteacher. Inspectors observed teachers in all year groups at least once.
- Inspectors looked at pupils’ work in books and on classroom displays. They listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors attended an assembly.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and talked to them at breakfast club, during lessons, in the playground, in the dining hall and as they moved around the school.
- The school have recently made significant changes to the teaching staff.
- There were ongoing building works at the time of the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of the 47 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke informally with parents and carers at the start of the day.
- Questionnaires completed by the 28 members of staff were taken into consideration.
- Many school documents were reviewed. These included: development plans, policies, records of monitoring, safeguarding and planning records, information for families and governing body documents.

### Inspection team

Ruth Dollner, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Christopher Christofides	Additional Inspector
Glen Goddard	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Catherine of Siena Catholic School is an average-sized primary school.
- The school became a convertor academy in July 2012. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust.
- The headteacher is retiring at the end of this academic year.
- The large majority of pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well-below average. This is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those in care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well-below average.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

- Improve leadership and management by developing the role of middle leaders so that their actions focus, more precisely, on priorities they have identified through their assessment of pupil progress and their judgements on the quality of teaching.
- Improve teaching further to help more pupils, particularly the more able, make better than expected progress by ensuring that:
  - staff in the Reception classes further develop their skills in providing activities, outside and inside, which give children the opportunity to achieve what they are capable of in all areas of learning
  - pupils consistently receive work which is at the right level of difficulty
  - the outstanding practice which exists in the school is shared.

## Inspection judgement

### The leadership and management are good

- The school is well led and managed by the headteacher who is ably supported by her senior leadership team and by the governors. The headteacher has shown great determination in ensuring that teaching continues to improve and has recently made significant changes to staffing to secure further improvements.
- All staff in the school have high quality teaching and good achievement for all at the forefront of their thinking. Staff say that they are proud to work at the school.
- The promotion of good behaviour and safety is outstanding. Leaders have created a welcoming atmosphere and a positive learning environment where learners can thrive. Values such as courtesy, fairness, determination, tolerance and respect for others are successfully promoted. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. The sharp focus on basic skills in English and mathematics has not diminished the opportunities for pupils to enjoy the full range of subjects including music, art and science. The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is successfully fostered through the daily life of the school and through the curriculum on offer. Leaders at all levels work hard to ensure outstanding behaviour and safety within the school.
- Subject leadership of English and mathematics is strong and has brought about improvements in achievement in these subjects.
- The school is developing its preferred approach to assessment to support the new National Curriculum and has sought advice from advisers in Hertfordshire to support this.
- The Headteacher and senior leaders know their school well and identify priorities for improvement accurately. They keep a close check on pupil progress and take swift action if individuals are at risk of underachieving.
- The pupil premium funding has been used exceptionally well to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils across the school. Additional targeted teaching has ensured that these pupils make at least the same progress as their classmates and that gaps in attainment are closing.
- The primary school sports funding has also been used exceptionally well by the school to secure improvements in teaching and to offer the pupils a broader range of activities, such as boxing. The highly skilled physical education (PE) co-ordinator has monitored the impact of this by talking to pupils about their healthy lifestyles and by asking them about their attitudes to PE. This is reflected in books pupils have made which share what they enjoy about PE. One Reception pupil wrote, 'I loved it when I jumped really high'.
- Senior leaders evaluate teaching in a range of ways and set targets for teachers which are sharply focussed on pupil achievement.
- Parents receive good information about the school through the school website and regular newsletters. They are well informed about the new National Curriculum because of the highly praised information sessions the school delivered.
- Subject /Key Stage leadership roles are not yet fully developed. Some leaders are new to their roles and are yet to ensure that their actions focus on the key priorities for the school. Plans for improvement are not sufficiently focussed on making sure that more pupils can make better than expected progress. Systems for tracking the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are not

yet consistent with the systems to track all pupils.

- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement.

#### ■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have a good understanding of the school's context, strength and areas for improvement. They are a highly skilled and committed group who work hard to improve their skills in supporting and challenging the work of the school effectively. Governors make visits to the school and the Chair is in regular contact with the headteacher.
- Governors ensure that the statutory duties of the governing body are fulfilled with regard to safeguarding and checks on procedures for managing the headteacher's and teachers' performance management.
- Governors ensure that the school's finances are well managed and enhance the quality of learning for pupils. They have clear succession plans in place for when the headteacher retires. They are using partnerships within the Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust to support their evaluation of what skills they have and what skills they need to develop further.
- Governors are aware of how the primary school sport funding is being allocated and understand the impact of the pupil premium funding on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils love their school and wear their uniform with pride. They have impeccable manners and are polite and courteous. Throughout the school pupils consistently demonstrate their commitment to cooperation with each other and with all the staff and visitors to the school. They are a pleasure to be with.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour have a strong impact on their learning. These contribute particularly to the excellent progress pupils make higher up the school. Even when work set is occasionally not at the right level for them to achieve what they are capable of, pupils apply themselves to work with enthusiasm. They readily and confidently engage in discussions about their work and are encouraged to do so. Pupils are keen to talk about their work and learning to visitors. One pupil told inspectors that they 'should come back again tomorrow because I'll have made this writing even better by then!'
- Pupils' enjoyment in coming to school is evident in the above-average rates of attendance and good punctuality.
- The breakfast club is well attended and ensures pupils get off to a good start at the beginning of the day.

#### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Safeguarding procedures meet all requirements. The school site is safe and secure. Staff are checked rigorously for their suitability and all visitors to the school are carefully checked and monitored.
- Pupils understand the importance of safe behaviour. They say they have no concerns about life in school and that they feel completely safe and cared for. Pupils show a good understanding of e-safety.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils' attitudes are underpinned by the strong Catholic ethos that pervades the school. Pupils are very clear about 'right' and 'wrong'. They treat everyone with kindness and respect. Bullying is extremely rare and there have been no incidents or exclusions in the past year. Pupils are confident that adults are always on hand if needed. When asked about this aspect of school life, one pupil said, 'We have kind and loving staff and caring friends'.
- Staff have consistently high expectations for behaviour inside and outside the classroom. Pupils understand fully the link between positive behaviour and successful learning.

- Parents share their children's positive views about the school. All parents who completed the online questionnaire, 'Parent View', said that they would recommend the school to another parent. One parent told inspectors that she thought children 'flourished' at St Catherine's.
- Case studies examined during the inspection and observations in classrooms provided evidence of the school's successful work with pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs. The care and support given to these pupils and to pupils who have medical conditions is outstanding.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- Work seen in pupils' books and on display around the school, observations in lessons and the school's own detailed knowledge about the quality of teaching confirm that teaching is at least good over time; some is outstanding. Teachers convey high expectations about learning and behaviour. Pupils understand the link between the two. Pupils and teachers work hard in lessons.
- Teachers, who are effectively supported by caring, enthusiastic and skilled teaching assistants, demonstrate good subject knowledge across the curriculum. All pupils benefit from work which is usually set at the right level and which interests them.
- Marking and feedback to pupils is a strength of the school. Teachers use marking consistently well to move pupils on in their learning and pupils respond to marking to improve their work. Pupils are also involved in evaluating their own and others' work.
- Teachers are skilled at questioning pupils effectively to challenge their thinking and understanding. In Years 5 and 6 much of the teaching leads to outstanding learning. Teachers are skilled at identifying gaps in pupils' learning and planning engaging tasks which challenge and inspire their pupils. In a mathematics lesson pupils were measuring the perimeter of huge shapes which had been stuck down in the hall. They were challenged, making outstanding progress and having fun at the same time. These were the key features of where the best learning was seen in the school during the inspection.
- Teachers typically select inspirational themes, topics and books for children to respond to in writing. In a Year 2 lesson children were writing about 'Monty the penguin' who is a very popular character on a television advertisement. Pupils of all abilities wrote at length about Monty and made very good progress within the session. Year 5 pupils wrote reports on 'what the inspectors need to write in the report'. The theme inspired and amused them. They wrote at length with great maturity and humour, making very rapid progress in their writing because of the quality of the feedback from the teacher.
- Reading is taught well across the school. Parents report that pupils in Key Stage 1 are using their phonics well to help them read. Pupils read widely and often across the curriculum. The inspection took place on Remembrance Day; one pupil recited an extended remembrance poem to the rest of the class with ease and with confidence. These two attributes were often witnessed in Years 5 and 6 where teaching and learning were outstanding.
- Occasionally pupils are given work which is not set at the level for them to make good or better progress. This is particularly true for some of the more-able pupils who are not always achieving what they are capable of. The outstanding practice which exists in the top end of the school is yet to be shared effectively with all staff to ensure that more pupils make outstanding progress.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- By the time they leave St Catherine of Siena, the vast majority of pupils have developed the knowledge and skills necessary for the next stage of their education. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 has been above the national average since the school became an academy.

- In 2014 the proportion of pupils making the expected rate of progress from the start of Year 3 was similar to the proportion that did so nationally. The proportion of pupils who made more than expected progress in reading and mathematics was below that seen nationally. Current progress across the school is good overall but teaching is not yet good enough to secure faster progress, particularly for the more-able pupils.
- In Year 1 pupils made good progress in their understanding and use of phonics (the sounds that letters make) for blending words to read. Attainment was above the national average in the phonics screening check. This was an improvement on 2013 when attainment was below average.
- The achievement of more-able pupils is sometimes held back by being given work which is too easy for them, particularly in mathematics and writing. This prevents them from making the rapid progress of which they are capable.
- There were too few disadvantaged pupils leaving the school in 2014 to make analysis of their achievement without identifying individuals. Disadvantaged pupils who are currently in the school make progress which is in line with that of their classmates and much of it is even stronger. This is due to the effective use of the pupil premium funding to close attainment gaps.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs all make progress in school but occasionally not as much as their classmates. The recently appointed special needs co-ordinator has already put plans in place to address this.

### The early years provision

### requires improvement

- Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement. The majority of the staff are relatively inexperienced and they have not yet been given the guidance and support they need to develop their skills further. Systems to help them understand how well children are progressing from their starting points, and to plan their next steps in learning are not well developed. Careful, regular recording to check pupils' development in all areas has not been established.
- Children's work shows that some children are making little or slow progress in some areas of development. This was evident when they were engaged in activities, in work in their books and in displays around the classrooms.
- All areas of development are planned for both inside and outside the classrooms but often activities are too difficult or too easy for some children. When they are too easy, children quickly lose interest. When they are too difficult, teaching assistants tend to take charge and do much of the work with and for children. This sometimes affects the progress children make.
- Teaching of phonics is given a high priority in Reception classes and children are generally working at the expected phase of phonics for their age. More-able children are not always challenged to move on to the higher phases of phonic knowledge. Staff in Reception have not had the opportunity to secure their skills in saying all the sounds that letters represent correctly and would benefit from further training on how to teach the higher phases of phonic knowledge effectively. Some staff expressed a desire to observe 'best practice' in this area.
- There is a safe and nurturing environment in which children quickly learn to play and work well together and where they are very well cared for. Warm, nurturing relationships exist between staff and children.
- Relationships with parents are very positive. Parents are encouraged to visit and see what their children experience on a daily basis. Parents told inspectors how happy their children are to come to school.
- In 2013 children's starting points when they entered Reception were below those typically seen for their age in communication and language skills and in literacy and mathematics development. By the end of Reception their skills and knowledge in these areas were broadly typical for their age and they had made good progress. In other areas of learning children made average progress during the year.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138288
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	448702

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	268
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Quinn
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pauline Curran
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01923 676022
<b>Fax number</b>	01923 893497
<b>Email address</b>	admin@st-catherine.herts.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2014

