

# St Catherine's Roman Catholic School

Pymore Road, Bridport, Dorset DT6 3TR

## Inspection dates

19–20 January 2017

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not successfully tackled the dip in results in the summer of 2016. Nor have they secured strong enough improvement to ensure that current pupils' progress is good.
- Pupils start the school with abilities that are in line with other pupils nationally, but do not make enough progress as they go through the school.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and on teachers' performance are not sufficiently rigorous.
- Teachers do not help pupils to develop their writing because they do not have a clear understanding of the requirements of the curriculum.
- Pupils are not applying their skills in writing or mathematics across the curriculum.
- Weakness in the leadership of the school, including in governance, has had a negative impact on pupils' progress. Leaders do not evaluate their work or the achievement of pupils rigorously or accurately.
- Teachers are not considering the specific needs of pupils, particularly the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils. As a result, these pupils are not being challenged sufficiently and attaining the highest standards.
- The activities for children in the early years are limiting their ability to solve problems and learn more deeply.
- External support has not helped leaders to improve pupils' achievement.

### The school has the following strengths

- The quality of care for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong. These pupils are making good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils feel safe and are safe in school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of British values. They are taught well about democracy and the rule of law.
- The school's values support good behaviour and encourage pupils to show respect for their teachers and each other. Consequently, the relationships between school leaders, staff and pupils are good.

## Full report

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

- Raise achievement by ensuring that:
  - pupils are able to apply and develop their writing and mathematical skills in a range of different subjects
  - the most able pupils in all year groups, including those who are disadvantaged, are provided with work that is sufficiently challenging, with more opportunities to deepen their thinking and solve problems
  - teachers are fully familiar with the demands of the curriculum and age-related expected standards.
- Improve teaching and leadership in the early years so that children of all abilities are fully supported and challenged in their learning and prepared for Year 1.
- Improve the quality of leadership and governance by ensuring that:
  - leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and the monitoring of teachers' performance promote more rapid improvement
  - the school's evaluation of its work and the achievement of pupils is accurate
  - external support is tailored to meet the needs of the school.

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

- School leaders have not been able to bring about the level of improvement necessary for achievement to be good in the early years and in writing at key stages 1 and 2.
- The results in the tests at the end of key stages 1 and 2 in the summer of 2016 were very weak. They placed the school among the bottom 10% of schools nationally in writing, spelling and grammar and in the lowest 25% in reading and mathematics.
- Support from the academy trust has not helped leaders to achieve higher outcomes for pupils. This is because the approach to school review taken by the academy trust has not sufficiently focused on the particular needs of the school. Leaders have not established vital improvements swiftly.
- Leaders have a plan for checking on the quality of teaching but their actions are not bringing about improvements quickly enough. Weaker teachers are supported so that their practice improves. However, leaders do not ensure that this improvement is sufficiently rapid or sustained. As a result, the impact on pupils' learning is limited.
- A lack of teachers' subject knowledge, against a backdrop of higher national expectations, is not enabling pupils to make adequate progress. Teachers have failed to grasp the level of change necessary to secure good outcomes for pupils, especially in writing.
- The curriculum is broad. However, teachers do not ensure that pupils apply and develop their mathematical and writing skills in subjects such as history, geography and science. The tasks set limit pupils' expectations and do not allow them to apply their knowledge effectively. Too often, the most able pupils are not stretched.
- The school undertook a review of the use of pupil premium funding the week before the inspection. It is, therefore, too soon to comment on the impact of any actions taken as a result of the review. The few disadvantaged pupils in Reception and key stage 1 are doing as well as other pupils in the school. Disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 are achieving well in reading but are not doing as well in writing and mathematics. These outcomes mirror the poorer outcomes of other key stage 2 pupils in the school.
- The physical education and sport premium funding is used well. The headteacher of a local secondary school commented that the pupils are talented and successful at a range of sports. The funding has supported initiatives such as a Year 6 pupil running for the secondary school team in a regional cross country competition.
- There is a range of extra-curricular activities, mainly sports orientated. Pupils enjoy these activities, are successful in them and gain confidence as a result. School leaders keep a close eye on the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and ensure that any barriers to their participation are removed. This inclusive practice is typical of the leaders and staff at the school and contributes to the positive attitudes of the pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are achieving well from their different starting points. Several parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities came into school or telephoned to speak with the inspection team.

They wanted to share their experiences and praise the work of the special educational needs coordinator. Many pupils transferred to the school during their primary phase of education and have settled in well. Pupils are happy and achieving well as a result of the support offered.

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is taught well. Pupils experience this through a range of activities, such as assemblies, religious education and themed activities. Year 5 and 6 pupils who were spoken to by inspectors spoke eloquently about their understanding of British values, democracy and the rule of law.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governance has gone through a turbulent period in recent months. Following the retirement of the chair of governors in November 2016, there was no immediate successor to this post. A new, experienced chair of governors has only recently been appointed. Many governors are new and less experienced, although they are keen to develop their understanding of school leadership. However, the rigorous support and challenge needed for the school has been absent. There has been too little urgency, so improvements have not materialised. It is recommended that a review take place to help speed up the process of school improvement.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders have created a culture where assessing risk is the norm. For example, leaders carefully monitor the key stage 2 playground situated at the top of steep steps. The personal safety and well-being of pupils are secure. The checks undertaken on staff, visitors and recruitment are stringent. Secure processes are in place for monitoring and recording any safeguarding concerns. Staff are trained in how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation, and from the influence of radical or extreme views. Staff work sensitively with parents and external agencies to monitor and support any vulnerable pupils.

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

### **Requires improvement**

- Teachers' planning ensures that pupils acquire skills in English and mathematics but not that they improve their understanding at greater depth. Hence, pupils, particularly the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not reaching the higher levels of which they are capable. This is evident in mathematics as well as writing.
- Pupils in key stage 1 do not know how to correct basic mistakes in their writing, such as in the placement of capital letters and full stops. This lack of understanding means that they do not have the skills and knowledge necessary to develop more sophisticated punctuation and grammar correctly in key stage 2.
- In light of the weak results in 2016, staff have prioritised spelling as an area for improvement. However, teachers are not recognising the level of attainment appropriate for the key stages in this area or enabling pupils to grasp more accurate spelling quickly.
- The teaching of basic calculation skills is strong in mathematics, which is helping pupils

of all abilities to achieve well in this area of work. Year 6 pupils grapple with algebra and make good progress. Nonetheless, overall, pupils' application of their mathematical skills to problem solving is underdeveloped, including in subjects other than mathematics.

- Pupils are fluent readers; this includes low-ability pupils in key stage 1. Pupils understand what they are reading and can explain ideas articulately and with confidence. The skills and understanding pupils apply in their reading are not replicated in their writing.
- The assessment of pupils' learning is informing future practice because it enables teachers to provide targeted support to correct pupils' misunderstandings.
- School routines for learning are followed consistently. Pupils are engaged in their learning and keen to do well. They support each other and use resources effectively. They are proud of their work, and presentation is a strength in all subjects and key stages.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and willing to answer questions and explain ideas.
- The nurturing of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is highly effective. Pupils who arrive at the school with high sensory deprivation show significant improvement and participate well in learning activities.
- The discussions of the school council are respected and pupils know that their ideas are valued and acted upon, such as in the book club where they share reading ideas.
- Each class has a 'worry' box. Pupils use it to share any concerns and they say that talking about their worries as a class eases anxiety.
- Pupils resolve their differences quickly. They know that bullying is not tolerated. They understand the many forms that bullying can take.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of internet safety, fire safety and water safety.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable in the way they conduct themselves around the school. They are polite and friendly to each other, visitors and staff.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They enjoy challenge and are keen to take on initiatives.
- Pupils respect the learning environment. There is no evidence of litter or damaged property.
- Pupils' attendance has improved. The practices for ensuring that pupils are in school

have been strengthened and the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, as well as other pupils, has improved accordingly.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **Requires improvement**

- Teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough and this has had an impact on results in English, mathematics and science. The most able pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are not making strong progress because the set activities are limiting their achievement.
- Leaders and teachers have an over-generous view of achievement. They are too willing to accept levels of progress and improvement that are not high enough as being evidence of good learning. They have misinterpreted the new national standards and expectations. Consequently, they are not teaching pupils to achieve these.
- Leaders are aware that the assessment of children in the early years was too generous in the past. Children were being assessed as having a good level of development when, in fact, some of their learning was not secure. Leaders have taken steps to address this, but there are still weaknesses in assessment.
- Some teachers are insecure in their subject knowledge and the activities they set reflect this. Pupils are not achieving well as they are limited by the resources used and tasks set.
- Low-ability pupils in key stage 1, including low-ability disadvantaged pupils, are making good progress in phonics and are able to spell simple words. They are writing well given their starting points. These pupils use mathematical apparatus efficiently to solve number problems.
- Disadvantaged pupils work as well as other pupils in the school in key stage 1. Their outcomes are less secure in key stage 2, particularly in mathematics and in writing. School leaders are not targeting funding specifically enough at these pupils' learning needs to ensure good progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are showing good progress from their different starting points. The high level of need of some pupils is understood by teachers and supported well by skilful teaching assistants.

### **Early years provision**

### **Requires improvement**

- Outcomes in reading and writing are below the national average. This is not good progress.
- Some children in the early years, mainly the most able and some middle-ability children, do not make the progress of which they are capable. These children are not well prepared academically for Year 1.
- Leadership of the early years is not fully effective, as planning and assessment are not robust and are not having the desired impact. Support has been provided in the past year by school leaders but has lacked the rigour necessary to ensure that children are progressing as well as they could.
- The majority of children are making better progress in mathematics. However, the

learning activities provided are not extending the most able. Resources are not selected or used well enough to provide greater challenge to the most able pupils.

- Children are compliant and settled in their learning. The routines established by the teacher ensure that children respect the equipment used. Children are polite to each other and to staff. They are enthusiastic about being involved and are gaining confidence in their own abilities.
- Parents have a good understanding of the progress made by their children; teachers and parents actively share information with each other.
- Leaders ensure that children are safe and free from harm.

## School details

Unique reference number	140757
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10024968

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	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Addis
Headteacher	Frances Guppy
Telephone number	01308 423568
Website	<a href="http://www.stcatherinesbridport.dorset.sch.uk/">www.stcatherinesbridport.dorset.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@stcatherinesbridport.dorset.sch.uk">office@stcatherinesbridport.dorset.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the physical education and sports premium for the current year, 2016/17, on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- St Catherine's Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school and is part of the Plymouth CAST. The trust was formed in April 2014. The work of the trust is overseen by a board of directors. The trust is responsible for one nursery, one first school, 32 primary schools and two secondary schools across seven local authorities in the south-west region.
- The school joined the trust and became an academy on 1 April 2014. When its predecessor school, St Catherine's Roman Catholic School, was last inspected by



Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.

- The headteacher of the school became an executive headteacher of this school and St Mary's Catholic Primary school, Axminster, in September 2016.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons jointly with senior leaders.
- A wide sample of pupils' work, from all year groups and a range of subjects, was scrutinised.
- Inspectors met and talked with groups of pupils from key stages 1 and 2, as well as with pupils informally across the site.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and the area adviser for the trust.
- Information and other documentary evidence were evaluated, including that relating to safeguarding, assessment, school evaluation and external reviews.
- Inspectors took account of the 44 responses to, and 42 comments in, the online Parent View survey, the parental and pupil surveys undertaken by the school, the one response to the pupil online survey, and the 16 responses to the staff online survey.

## Inspection team

Kathy Maddocks, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Susan Watts	Ofsted Inspector
Gareth Simons	Ofsted Inspector

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