

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Cobden Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN11 4BD

Inspection dates 11–12 November 2015

Overall effectiveness **Inadequate**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Pupils do not make enough progress in reading, writing or mathematics as they move through the school. Their standards are significantly below average by the end of Year 6.
- Steps taken by school leaders to improve teaching have not yet brought about the required improvements. Some teachers have low expectations and the work they provide for pupils is too easy.
- Work in pupils' books is of poor quality. In some books, there is very little work and teachers readily praise poor efforts.
- Although teachers conscientiously provide feedback to pupils, their work does not show improvement as a result.
- Behaviour in classrooms is not always as good as it could be. There are times when progress slows because pupils are not fully engaged in learning.
- School leaders do not make precise enough use of all available performance information to set priorities for school improvement. Some targets lack clarity and consequently it is difficult to evaluate the impact of actions taken.
- School plans for improvement are long and unwieldy. There are too many additional supplementary plans and so some staff do not fully understand the key drivers for improvement.
- Some subject leaders are new to their roles and have not yet had time to raise standards in their subjects.
- Governors provide insufficient challenge to school leaders. They accept reports from the school but do not always check on the validity of the information supplied

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are happy and enjoy school. Staff provide good care to pupils so they feel safe and secure. Pupils' attendance has risen and is now average.
- Children's attainment in the early years and Key Stage 1 has improved. It is now broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The leadership team has been reorganised, with new staff leading key subjects. They are ambitious and have a sense of energy and purpose.
- The curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - teachers use assessment information to plan work that is at the right level for all pupils
 - pupils have secured basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2
 - teachers' feedback to pupils about how to improve their work makes greater impact.

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do by providing a greater level of challenge and demanding more of them
 - developing teachers' questioning skills to better probe pupils' understanding and extend their thinking
 - insisting on the highest standards of work at all times.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - making better use of all available information to identify school priorities
 - streamlining improvement planning so that actions are specific and manageable
 - evaluating more effectively the impact of actions taken to raise standards and improve teaching.

An external review of governance is recommended, which 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

- Since the previous inspection, significant staff changes at all levels have impeded the progress leaders have been able to make. Consequently early improvements have not been sustained.
- The newly established leadership team is ambitious and shows high levels of commitment to drive the school forward. They are currently working together to review provision and to set more manageable priorities for improvement. They know that this needs to be rapid and are confident that current staff have the skills and expertise to bring about the improvements needed.
- The school has extensive plans for development but these are too long and have an unmanageable number of actions for development. Supplementary plans produced by key leaders increase the workload without adding significantly to raising standards. This means that staff are working hard to address all actions and the key priorities can be missed.
- School leaders have taken decisive action to improve teaching. They visit lessons and provide coaching and feedback to teachers, informing them of how their work can be improved. This is already bringing about results, as seen in the improvement in pupils' achievement in the early years and Key Stage 1. However, leaders do not check the difference that teaching makes to the quality of pupils' work to adjust their support for each teacher.
- School leaders have a broadly accurate understanding of what needs to be improved. However, they do not make full use of all available information to give a clear picture of what precisely needs to be done. Consequently some targets for improvement lack precision, making it difficult for leaders to assess the impact of their actions.
- Systems to manage the performance of staff have been strengthened so that teachers now know they are accountable for the progress pupils make. Teachers will only progress on the salary scale when they can demonstrate that pupils have made good progress. There is a planned programme of training to help teachers to improve their skills. However, this is at an early stage and has not yet had time to bring about the required improvements.
- Following the government's decision to remove national curriculum levels, the school has implemented a new system to record and track pupils' learning. This has helped them to closely check the progress made by disadvantaged pupils to ensure that the use of additional funding is spent wisely. Current information shows that there is very little difference between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others in school.
- One recent success is the way in which school leaders have planned the new curriculum, ensuring good coverage of all the required subjects under interesting themes. Enrichment activities such as visits to local places of interest add to pupils' enjoyment of learning.
- Subjects such as Italian, music and art contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. During the inspection, all pupils and staff joined together in the playground to observe a minute's silence to remember the war dead. Pupils demonstrated respect, sensitivity and thoughtfulness at this time. The high quality of collective worship allows pupils to reflect on wider issues such as democracy, tolerance and understanding of people. It prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The primary schools sports funding has been used to good effect to improve teachers' skills as well as to provide specialist coaches for sports. Pupils thoroughly enjoy sports and they take part enthusiastically.
- Procedures to ensure that pupils are safe at school are well thought out. All staff have received recent training on how to spot signs that a pupil may be at risk from harm. All adults who visit school are checked and systems for safeguarding pupils meet all requirements.
- The school is responding positively to the high level of support now provided by the local authority.
- The large majority of parents who responded to the survey were very positive about the school and believed the school was well led and managed. Staff too were very positive about the support they receive from leaders.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are supportive of the school. They visit school regularly and have reorganised committees to allow them to carry out their duties. They have received training to help them to understand performance information. However, they do not use this information robustly to challenge school leaders and so weaknesses in performance go unchecked. Governors know that teaching is not good enough, and support the actions leaders are taking to bring about improvements. They monitor

finances carefully and ensure that all statutory policies and procedures are in place. As part of the actions taken to raise standards, governors are now linked with 'phase' leaders for different age groups so they can gain a broader perspective on how well pupils are doing.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- Although there are some examples of good teaching, most is not good enough to raise pupils' achievement.
- Teachers do not use assessment information well enough when planning lessons and so work for pupils is not pitched at the right level. Often teachers have low expectations of what pupils can do and tasks are too easy for most pupils.
- Some teachers have insecure subject knowledge and their lessons lack clarity and purpose so pupils do not know what they are expected to learn. There are times when pupils' progress slows because they are not provided with enough examples of what they are expected to do. Sometimes much time is wasted and pupils are slow to start their work.
- Although teachers ask pupils questions, these are usually at a low level and not used to probe pupils' understanding and deepen their thinking. This slows pupils' progress and prevents them from reaching the levels of which they are capable.
- Teachers provide pupils with useful comments about what they have done well and what they need to do to further improve their work. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to act on these comments and so they repeat the same mistakes and do not make sufficient progress. There are times when teachers are overgenerous with their praise and so pupils make little effort to improve their work.
- Work in pupils' books shows that they have poor handwriting and that their skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar are weak. Their work is poorly presented and teachers do not address this and so pupils make inadequate progress.
- In those lessons where teachers have a clear view of what they want pupils to learn, pupils progress well. For example in a Year 3/4 class, the teacher provided pupils with a poem relating to Armistice Day as a stimulus for their own writing. This inspired pupils' imaginations and contributed well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Teaching assistants are well trained and provide good support to disadvantaged pupils and those who have special needs. Teaching assistants are effective in building pupils' confidence and helping them to take part in lessons.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are good.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Although they have positive attitudes to school, the quality of work in their books is untidy and they do not take enough care with their work.
- Although most classrooms are bright and attractive, with examples of pupils' work displayed, some areas of the school are untidy and unwelcoming. Some displays in corridors are in need of refreshment.
- The school provides a caring and nurturing environment and so pupils feel safe and secure. Pupils know that adults care for them and are trusted to respond to any concerns they may have. Bullying and racism are very rare and are tackled effectively by staff.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. They are taught to stay safe when using technology and they are taught about risks associated with dangers outside school such as those relating to roads and water. They know that substances such as tobacco and some non-medicinal drugs can be dangerous.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Although pupils have positive attitudes to school, there are occasions when they get distracted and start to chat among themselves, and this has an impact on their learning. This usually occurs when teaching fails to capture pupils' interest.
- Some pupils take too long to settle to lessons after breaks, and require frequent reminders from teachers

about the need to get on with work rather than chat. Pupils have not all developed good working habits and so when they are stuck, they sit and wait for adult help rather than to try to solve the problem for themselves.

- Pupils get on well together regardless of background. They care for each other and will go out of their way to help each other should a problem arise. They say that all pupils are treated equally and that discrimination on any grounds is not tolerated.
- Lunchtimes are calm and orderly and there is a good range of activities available for pupils at breaktimes. Pupils are sensible and respond quickly to adults' instructions. They move about the school safely and calmly and show sensitivity to the needs of others.
- Measures taken by school leaders to improve attendance have been successful. Consequently pupils' attendance has improved and is now broadly average.
- Parents, staff and pupils say that behaviour is good and there are few incidents of poor behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils are inadequate

- Pupils are not prepared well enough for the next stage of their education. This is because they make too little progress from their starting points and do not reach the standards expected for their age. By the end of Year 6 in 2015, their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was significantly below average.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 has improved and is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make better progress than others. This is because they receive good support from skilled teaching assistants, who target individual pupils to help them understand what to do, or work with small groups to develop pupils' skills.
- The gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in school has closed rapidly owing to focused interventions to help these pupils to succeed.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in learning spoken English. They make better progress than other pupils in school in mathematics and writing but not in reading. Their progress remains below that expected overall.
- The most-able pupils do not make enough progress. This is because the work they are given is very similar to that given to all pupils and is too easy.
- A greater emphasis on teaching letters and the sounds that they make (phonics) has brought some improvements in reading. However, some pupils in Year 2 lack confidence in using their knowledge to read fluently, and while pupils in Year 6 are developing more fluency in reading, their skills are below those expected overall.
- Work in pupils' books shows they have not made enough progress in writing. This is because they have not mastered basic skills securely enough by the end of Year 2. Although there are plenty of times when they write when learning other subjects, they do not write fluently or imaginatively. They do not have a wide enough vocabulary to express their ideas clearly and with purpose.
- Although pupils' recall of number facts and multiplication tables has improved, there are too few occasions when they apply these to solving mathematical problems. Consequently, they fail to deepen their understanding and this slows their progress in mathematics.

Early years provision requires improvement

- The majority of children are prepared for Year 1. Teaching has improved this year and the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is in line with that seen nationally.
- Teachers make better use of assessment information to plan learning experiences that are better matched to children's developmental needs. However, there is too little challenge for the most-able children and so they do not make as much progress as they should.
- There is an appropriate balance of activities that children choose for themselves and those that are led by adults. This helps children to develop learning behaviours such as independence and resilience.
- Teachers keep records of children's progress that are shared with parents so that parents can be partners in their children's learning.

- Children settle quickly into the routines of school. They get on well together and share and take turns. They cooperate and listen to each other. They behave well and feel safe in school.
- Staff have created a safe environment in which children confidently explore and play. Although it is well resourced both indoor and outside, some areas lack sufficient activities to stimulate children's imaginations. The leader has plans to address this because it limits children's creative development.
- Leadership has improved. The current leader has a clear understanding of what needs to be improved and has appropriate plans in place to make changes.

School details

Unique reference number	126042
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10002296

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	289
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Dargen-Murphy
Headteacher	Cecilia Lewis
Telephone number	01903 234115
Website	www.stmarysworthing.org.uk
Email address	office@stmarysworthing.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 November 2013

Information about this school

- St Mary's is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding is lower than average. This is additional funding provided by the government to support pupils who, in this school, qualify for free school meals or are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and/or who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school provides full-time early years provision for children in two reception classes. Pupils throughout the rest of the school are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The school failed to meet the government's floor standards in 2015. These set the minimum expectations for pupils' learning and progress.
- There have been considerable changes to the staffing and leadership team since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils working in 16 lessons or parts of lessons, 12 of which were observed jointly with school leaders. They attended one act of collective worship and they listened to pupils reading in Year 2 and Year 6. They looked at work in pupils' books and work on display around the school.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, staff and members of the governing body, including the chair. Meetings were also held with groups of pupils and two representatives from the local authority.
- Among the documents scrutinised were school policies and records relating to pupils' behaviour, information about pupils' learning and progress and minutes from governors meetings. Inspectors also reviewed school improvement plans and records showing how leaders check the performance of staff. The school's procedures for keeping pupils safe were also evaluated.
- The views of parents were taken into account by analysing the 62 responses to the online survey Parent View. Inspectors also spoke informally to parents during the inspection. The views of staff were taken into account by considering the 32 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Joy Considine, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Llyn Codling	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Gordon	Ofsted Inspector

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