

School report



St Kentigern's RC Primary School

Bethnall Drive, Fallowfield, Manchester, M14 7ED

Inspection dates 13–14 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Pupils' achievement in Years 1 to 6 in English and mathematics is inadequate. Pupils' progress varies considerably across the school and, given pupils' individual starting points, standards are too low.
- The quality of teaching for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is inadequate. Not enough teaching is of a high enough standard to close quickly the gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge, especially in mathematics and writing.
- Teachers do not use effectively their assessment of pupils' ability to ensure all pupils complete work at the level they are capable of.
- Teachers do not insist that pupils always present their work neatly. The quality of marking is too variable and very few pupils respond to their teachers' advice.
- Too much teaching results in restless pupils who do not concentrate well and their progress slows.
- Significant difficulties around leadership, resulting in the formation of a new governing body and leadership team, have adversely affected the school's performance. A legacy of underachievement is still holding back progress across the school.
- Leadership and management of the school require improvement because, while actions to improve the quality of teaching have begun to have an impact, improvements are not fully embedded across the school.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in Nursery and Reception achieve well due to good teaching.
- High quality safeguarding of pupils is part of the way of life at the school. The headteacher and governing body are clear that standards can be better. They have raised expectations for the school's performance.
- Leaders have successfully maintained good standards in pupils' reading. They have begun to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' attendance and, as a result, standards are starting to improve.
- Leaders and governors ensure that pupils benefit from specialist support in physical education so that they are fit and healthy.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out in response to two complaints made to Ofsted which raised serious concerns. The complaints were deemed to be qualifying complaints and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector decided that an unannounced inspection of the school should take place to follow up the whole-school issues that were raised. Inspectors sought to establish whether:
 - safeguarding procedures are adequate, including the response to pupils presenting challenging behaviour
 - suitable adjustments are made to behaviour management procedures according to the pupils' needs and disabilities
 - staff are suitably trained and able to seek advice and support when required
 - leaders and the governing body are effective in monitoring and evaluating policy and practice for behaviour management and safeguarding within the school.
- Inspectors observed 18 part lessons taught by 14 different teachers. One of these lessons was jointly observed with the headteacher. In addition, an inspector observed the headteacher giving feedback to the teacher about the lesson observed.
- Inspectors met with a group of Key Stage 2 pupils and listened to two groups of pupils reading in Year 2 and Year 4.
- Inspectors talked with pupils during lessons and at play time and lunchtime to hear their views of the school. Inspectors also carried out a confidential survey of 63 pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6 in order to gather their views about bullying in the school.
- Inspectors talked informally with some parents at the beginning of the school day and took account of 11 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors examined the outcomes of the school's own parental questionnaire during the inspection.
- The school's work was observed and the inspection team looked at a number of documents, including safeguarding records, the school's improvement plan, data for tracking pupils' progress, reports on the quality of teaching, teachers' planning and work in pupils' books.

Inspection team

Drew Crawshaw, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mujahid Ali

Additional Inspector

Yvonne Brown

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), 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.

Information about this school

- St. Kentigern's is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of girls and boys are broadly similar.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. Pupil premium funding is an additional grant given by the government to schools for those children known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds is high, as is the number who speak English as an additional language.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club, open to all children, each school day.
- In 2013, the school met the government's floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the last inspection, a new senior leadership team has been appointed and a new governing body has been established. The school employs 16 teachers; the vast majority are new to the school having been appointed within the last 12 months.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of teaching so that the achievement of all pupils is consistently good by:
 - making learning relevant and enjoyable for children of all ages and all abilities
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to apply their skills, particularly in mathematics and writing, across a wide range of contexts
 - using assessment data effectively to plan lessons which encourage pupils of all abilities to do their best in all subjects
 - raising expectation through the insistence that pupils present their work at a high standard in every lesson
 - ensuring that pupils improve their work by responding to teachers' marking and comments
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in all subjects
 - sharing and adapting the good teaching practice already seen in some areas of the school
 - reviewing and improving the subject knowledge of all teachers in those areas in which they are not specialists, particularly mathematics and science.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring planned actions to improve the quality of teaching and the rate of progress made by all pupils are closely monitored and evaluated and those actions that are judged as not effective are improved or replaced quickly
 - refining the school's development plan to include clear measures of success which relate to improving outcomes for pupils

- regularly checking that strategies to improve teaching are being fully implemented in all classes
- strengthening the leadership and accountability for specific groups of pupils such as those with special educational needs to ensure they make better progress.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- Although published information shows pupils in Year 6 in 2013 made above average levels of progress overall, inspection evidence and school data show that the progress of pupils currently in the school in Key Stages 1 and 2 is weak when measured over time, particularly so for groups of pupils including the more able. Too often work has lacked the challenge needed for the most able to achieve as well as they could.
- From their different starting points and levels of ability, several groups of pupils underachieve in English and mathematics. These groups include White British boys, pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds, pupils who speak English as an additional language, pupils with special educational needs and those eligible for free school meals. These groups of pupils reach levels which are much lower than their peers both in school and nationally.
- Since September 2013, when an accurate assessment of pupils' attainment was made jointly by the headteacher and the local authority, standards have improved in some areas of the school such as in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 6.
- While the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium remains inadequate, there are signs of improvement. The school's own data, which inspectors judged to be accurate, show that the gap in attainment between pupil premium pupils, including those eligible for free school meals and other pupils, is around three terms by the time they leave the school. Nevertheless, the gap in attainment between these groups of pupils has reduced in almost all year groups since September 2013.
- In mathematics, a significant number of pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. Pupils find work too hard or too easy because the tasks set do not take account of what they already know. The most able pupils do not move quickly on to harder tasks. Pupils are sometimes confused about how to complete tasks because the teachers' explanations are unclear. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 have limited opportunities to test and develop their mathematical understanding by solving problems that they may encounter in everyday life.
- In writing, variability in teachers' expectations has led to inconsistency in the presentation and quality of pupils' work in Key Stages 1 and 2. Examples of incomplete work can be seen in pupils' workbooks. Written work is also often untidy or much shorter than might be expected given the ability of pupils in each class. The expectation for high-quality writing is not evident in subjects other than English; for example in science, reports following experiments are short, poorly presented and sometimes contain incorrect spellings of key scientific words. In humanities books, work is sometimes left unmarked by the teacher and, as a result, standards in writing can be seen to deteriorate over time.
- In science, progress is slow and achievement is poor overall. Pupils were observed taking part in scientific investigations, however, progress was limited by a lack of equipment and the poor subject knowledge of the teacher. Consequently, pupils were bored, uncreative in their responses to questions and did not learn anything new. The scrutiny of pupils' books showed that expectations are not high enough in science.
- Achievement in reading is good across the school. There is a structured approach to the teaching of reading, and pupils are encouraged to read and change their books often. Those pupils who read to inspectors said they enjoyed reading at school and at home, they were able to work out difficult words for themselves and they understood what they were reading.
- Children in Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress and have a positive start to school life. Children enter the school with knowledge and skills that are well below those typical for their age. Children achieve well because teaching in this area of the school is good. Children enjoy their learning in real-life situations; they have fun and interact with one another. Adults regularly check how well each child is learning and leaders act swiftly to ensure any identified gaps in a child's knowledge and skills are supported through a targeted intervention.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs underachieve in Key Stages 1 and 2. This is because leadership of the provision for this group of pupils is weak. The standard of

teaching of pupils with special educational needs, both in class on an individual or small-group basis, is not monitored effectively and therefore support for their needs is variable in quality.

- The fluctuation in rates of progress, which leads to underperformance by groups of pupils as they move through the school, means that the school's promotion of equality is ineffective.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- The quality of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is inadequate. Not enough teaching has been of good quality over a prolonged period of time to help pupils make the progress required. In these key stages, teachers do not make sufficient use of the school's accurate assessment data to quickly close gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- In too many lessons, the most able pupils make slower progress than they should because they are not expected to move on to harder work quickly enough. Teachers make detailed plans for lessons but do not always adapt these plans when they realise additional challenge is needed.
- Teachers' subject knowledge, particularly in mathematics and science, is too weak. As a result, explanations given to pupils can become unclear or confusing or teachers miss opportunities to extend learning by providing additional questions or challenges. For example, in a science lesson more able pupils did not extend their understanding of electrical circuits because the teacher did not introduce additional tasks to test their thinking of how switches worked.
- The marking of pupils' work is not effective in supporting the pupils to improve their work consistently. Almost all teachers give good guidance on why a pupil has or has not done well in a piece of work, along with additional information on how they can improve next time. In a small number of instances teachers set additional tasks designed to test the pupils' ability at a higher level. However, the impact of marking is reduced because most pupils do not return to their work in order to improve it, nor are they given the time to respond to the additional tasks set.
- Standards of writing in subjects other than English are often poor and do not contribute to improving the literacy skills of pupils effectively. Opportunities to improve writing are missed because teachers do not place enough emphasis on the development of literacy skills in subjects beyond English. Writing in other subjects, for example in science and humanities, is often scruffy, poorly presented and incomplete.
- Inspectors saw examples of teaching where pupils made good progress because adults used their understanding of pupils' ability levels to set tasks which made them think. In these cases, adults also followed the school behaviour policy meticulously which resulted in positive relationships between adults and pupils and a fabulous atmosphere for learning.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children in this area of the school are encouraged to explore and learn for themselves. Children are happy; they mix well with others and, based on their starting points, develop key skills effectively. Children have ample access to a range of activities, including books, which stimulate their interest. Adults use their assessment of the children's progress to ensure they have a balance of activities and so that effective intervention can be made if gaps in development are identified.
- The effectiveness of support provided by other adults is too variable. In some cases, for example when pupils are given extra help with their reading, adults are effective in boosting the progress of pupils. As a result, pupils throughout the school make good progress in their reading. However, in too many cases, additional adults do not use their time to good effect. Consequently, some pupils spend too much time completing their work incorrectly while others waste time waiting for support to arrive. In some cases teaching assistants give questions that do not encourage the pupils to think for themselves or they answer pupils' questions too quickly. As a result, pupils do not develop a deeper understanding of the topics being discussed.
- The school uses primary schools sports funding effectively and, consequently, the teaching of physical education, in formal physical education lessons, during lunchtimes and in after-school clubs, is good. The introduction of sporting activities at lunchtime and playtime has led to the vast majority of pupils being active during these times. As a consequence, behaviour during

playtime and lunchtime is good.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Most of the time pupils respond quickly to teachers' requests and instructions. However, during lessons pupils can become distracted and uninterested when the tasks they are set are mundane or either too easy or too hard. On these occasions, some pupils become fidgety and distract their peers close by, while others become bored, switch-off and make little progress.
- Behaviour around school is good. Inspectors saw no examples of poor behaviour. Pupils were always polite; they opened doors for adults and responded to any questions with full and honest answers.
- Behaviour has improved following changes made by the new headteacher. Pupils spoken to said that school is fun now, there is less falling out and, since the introduction of peer-mediators, pupils are more likely to sort out their differences without the intervention of adults. Parents spoken with, along with those who responded to the online questionnaire, supported this view.
- The use of primary sports funding to buy equipment and to employ a specialist sports coach, along with the introduction of sports leaders, a group of Year 6 pupils, has been effective in increasing participation levels of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils now become engaged in purposeful activities at playtimes and, as a result, behaviour at these times is often exemplary. This behaviour spills over into the dining room where there is a family atmosphere to eating and into after-school clubs, where on some evenings over 130 pupils stay behind.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The headteacher has put improved procedures in place to record incidents of poor behaviour including bullying. Information is now collected systematically and analysed by leaders to look for patterns and trends. Pupils spoken with and surveyed said that the level of bullying in school is minimal and they were confident that they could speak to adults if they had concerns.
- Attendance, although not in the bottom 10% of primary school nationally, is low. Improved systems have been put in place to monitor absence and a pastoral manager has been employed to support children and families in need. Consequently, the number of pupils who have high levels of absence has fallen to below average and the punctuality of pupils arriving at school in the morning is good.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The leadership and management of the school is not good because despite changes made to the way the school is organised, there remains variability in the extent of progress made by different groups of pupils, especially in mathematics and writing.
- The headteacher is passionate about school improvement and has put the pupils at the heart of the school. The headteacher has worked effectively with the local authority, the diocese and a range of other external support agencies to establish a senior leadership team with clear lines of accountability. Leaders have an accurate idea of what needs to be done to improve the school and their actions are starting to show a positive impact. For example, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are beginning to improve, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 6.
- Following the series of complaints which led to this inspection, St. Kentigern's has come through an episode of substantial change including the appointment of a new leadership team along with the reconstitution of a new governing body. The headteacher has acted swiftly to ensure all pupils are safe within the school. Staff have been trained to apply the new behaviour management and safeguarding policies effectively. Pupils are safe in school and challenging behaviour is managed appropriately.
- Past action has not been swift enough to tackle weaker teaching. The headteacher has now addressed this. A robust performance management system has been put in place and teachers

are held to account for their performance and their impact on pupils' progress. As a direct consequence, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader has fine-tuned her monitoring of children's progress so that gaps in learning can be acted on quickly. This means that children in Nursery and Reception are now making good progress.

- Although leaders' planning for improvement is based on accurate self-evaluation, it has not led to rapid enough gains in achievement. The school improvement plan sets out appropriate actions designed to address the legacy of underperformance. However, it does not contain measures in terms of pupils' progress by which leaders and governors can evaluate the impact of their actions.
- The leadership of teaching requires improvement. Despite the swift action to introduce improved systems of accountability and monitoring, some initiatives are yet to have a full impact on the achievement of pupils across the school. Leaders are not yet rigorous enough in ensuring all teachers apply whole-school policies effectively and therefore teaching is not improving rapidly in all areas of the school.
- A middle leader structure has been established to ensure the drive for improvement does not rest too heavily with the headteacher. Although new in post, middle leaders are beginning to be effective. Leaders have taken action to provide a curriculum which is appropriate to the needs of all pupils currently at the school. A new timetable has been designed to allow teachers to concentrate on key skills in an organised and routine way each morning. Playtimes and lunchtimes are used to encourage pupils to interact with each other so that good social skills become embedded within the school. Curriculum enhancement activities, including after-school clubs, provide increased opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Until recently, both the local authority and the diocese have been ineffective in identifying and acting on underachievement in the school. Following the appointment of the new headteacher, the local authority and diocese have acted swiftly to provide much needed support. This action has been effective in supporting the school to establish new leadership and teaching teams along with the establishment of a new governing body.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The new governing body is committed to school improvement. Governors bring a wide range of experience to support and challenge the school. Governors have been instrumental in the introduction of a new performance management system with which they hold leaders and teachers to account for their actions. Although this action has led to several teachers leaving the school and new teachers being appointed to replace them, it is too early to judge the full impact of the positive steps taken by the governing body. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they are beginning to ask searching questions, for example about the underperformance of different groups of pupils. Governors are accurate in their understanding of where teaching is both strong and weak in the school and how this is impacting on the improvements seen, for instance in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Governors have a good grasp of the school's finances and have managed them well, despite the difficult circumstances in which they took over. Governors are aware that the school's use of pupil premium funds has not been effective in raising the achievement of the intended group of pupils. It is too soon to identify whether recent actions to rectify this have made any difference.
 - The new governing body has worked effectively with officers from the diocese and the local authority to manage the impact of issues relating to the complaint.

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	105584
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	440726

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	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	448
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gerry Hodson
Headteacher	Alison Thornton
Date of previous school inspection	20 April 2010
Telephone number	0161 224 6842
Fax number	0161 256 4946
Email address	admin@st-kentigerns.manchester.sch.uk

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