

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Primary School

Tout Hill, Wincanton, Somerset, BA9 9DH

Inspection dates 6–7 May 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- In the past, the standards pupils achieve at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics have been below that seen nationally.
- Pupils' progress is not consistently good across all year groups, particularly in mathematics.
- The progress pupils have made in mathematics is slower than in reading and writing.
- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently good in all classes.
- Teachers do not challenge the most able sufficiently and consistently in lessons and, as a result, they do not attain the highest levels.
- Middle leaders are still developing the skills needed to support the senior leadership team fully in securing high standards across the school.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has a clear strategic vision to improve the school. Her determination to raise the quality of teaching is beginning to have an impact on the progress pupils are making. The new assistant headteacher ably supports her and together they work as a very effective team.
- Children in early years make good progress from their individual starting points. They are well prepared for the move into Year 1.
- The behaviour of the pupils is good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and try hard. Pupils say they feel safe in school and that they are well looked after.
- The governing body is now a more effective team. The governors hold the senior leaders to account for the work of the school more rigorously than at the time of the previous inspection.
- The school develops the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively and prepares pupils for their next stage in education and life in modern democratic Britain.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in seven lessons, one of which was jointly observed with the headteacher. He also observed part of the 'Crowning of Mary' celebration assembly.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils and senior leaders. The inspector met with the Chair of the Governing Body, the vice-chair and two other governors.
- The inspector also met with an external adviser working with the school and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the diocese.
- The inspector listened to pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read, and scrutinised samples of pupils' workbooks.
- The inspector examined a wide range of documents including the school's information on pupils' recent progress. He also looked at planning and documentation about checks on teaching, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took into account the 30 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

David Hogg, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. All pupils in school attend on a full-time basis.
- The school has three mixed year classes. Class 1 is made up of children and pupils from Reception and Year 1. Pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 work together in Class 2, and Class 3 is made up of pupils from Year 3 and Year 4. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are taught in two single year group classes.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is lower than that found in most schools. This funding is to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority. In Year 6, in 2014, there were too few disadvantaged pupils for their attainment to be compared to that of others without the risk of identifying individuals.
- Most pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is a little below the national average. The proportion of pupils who do not speak English as their first language is a little above that seen nationally.
- The school met the government's current floor standards in 2014, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- A senior member of staff was seconded to the school in September 2014 and took on the substantive role of assistant headteacher in January 2015.
- The school has undergone a high level of turbulence in staffing over the past two years.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers:
 - give pupils more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical understanding in other subject areas
 - consistently provide pupils with greater challenge within lessons so that the progress of all groups of pupils, but especially the most-able, can be accelerated.
- Raise the achievement of all groups of pupils, including the most-able, by ensuring that their skills in reading, writing and especially in mathematics are developed and applied more quickly.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management to outstanding by extending the role of middle leaders to ensure consistent and effective monitoring of teaching and learning in class.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has been tenacious in her efforts to improve the quality of teaching in the school. The turnover within the teaching team has been high and has slowed the impact of some initiatives. Consequently, some aspects of teaching are not yet consistently good. The support and guidance the headteacher has provided have developed the skills of the teachers. This work continues with the teachers who have recently joined the school. Teachers now have higher expectations of what pupils should achieve and the progress pupils make is improving. The school now has rigorous procedures for setting targets to improve teachers' practice. These link the opportunities teachers have for promotion and salary increases to the progress of their pupils.
- The local authority and the diocese have provided good support in helping all school leaders, including governors, to become more effective in their roles. The new assistant headteacher works closely with the headteacher and together they make a strong senior leadership team. The school's evaluation of its own work is accurate and development plans record the improvements the school has made since the previous inspection. This has given the governors a clear picture of how the school has tackled underachievement and the next steps in the school's improvement.
- Senior and middle leaders review the progress pupils make through the scrutiny of their work. Middle leaders are, however, only beginning to be involved in checking the quality of learning in lessons. Their work is yet to have a full impact on the school's drive to raise standards. That said, there is now a much more effective leadership team in place who is in a position to improve the school further.
- The school uses additional funding, including pupil premium funding, well. The school rigorously checks the progress pupils make to assess if any need additional support to help them succeed. As a result, the achievement of different groups of pupils eligible for support is improving. There is now an increasing focus on the need to provide more consistently greater challenge for the most-able pupils. The governing body reviews the impact of this aspect of the school's work carefully to ensure all pupils have the opportunity to succeed and achieve well, and that there is no discrimination.
- The programme of subjects offered by the school provides a good range of interesting activities that engages the pupils. The range of subjects covered is broad. Staff plan activities that will spark pupils' interest. Often the teachers will plan tasks which follow the pupils' interests in a particular aspect of a topic. Teachers enrich the lessons with visits to places of interest or with visitors coming into school. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 enjoyed a visit by a local animal rescue charity that brought a number of unusual animals for the pupils to see and hold, including an owl and a ferret. The pupils then followed this visit up by writing a report on nocturnal animals. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their writing skills in other subject areas, for example in science and religious education. They do not, however, have as many opportunities to apply their mathematical skills outside numeracy lessons.
- The ethos of care and respect within the school underpins much of work that takes place, and pupils want to do well. Pupils are able to reflect both on moral issues and on their own academic work. They have opportunities to explore different faiths and the beliefs of others within the local area. During the inspection, pupils took part in the 'Crowning of Mary' celebration. Children from the Reception class to the pupils in Year 6 took their roles within the assembly and procession very seriously. Their singing was excellent. Music is a rich aspect of the pupils' life in school. All pupils have the opportunity of playing a brass instrument in Years 3 and 4.
- Pupils are able to discuss key issues. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good and fosters good relationships within school. They are well prepared for life in modern, democratic Britain and the move on to the next stage of their education.
- The primary sports funding is used well to improve staff teaching skills, for example in gymnastics. In addition, it provides specialist sports coaching in a range of competitive sports. Participation rates in inter-school sports have increased, with the school beginning to enjoy success in competitions. For example, during the inspection, Key Stage 2 pupils gained a creditable third place in a KWIK cricket tournament.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and are effective. All staff have the appropriate level of training in this area. The school is diligent in the background checks it makes prior to employing a new member of staff.
- The school has established good links with parents. Regular newsletters and an up-to-date website keep parents well informed about the school's work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body have a much clearer view of their roles than at the previous inspection. They have received training from the local authority to develop their skills and now more effectively

hold school leaders to account. Governors now contribute to the school's self-evaluation.

- The school provides the governors with information about the progress groups of pupils make, which they review carefully. They make comparisons between the school's performance and the national picture.
- Governors visit the school regularly and meet with key members of staff. Through these regular meetings, they get a good overview of the school's work and the quality of teaching. They understand how the school is working to tackle underachievement. Governors understand how the teachers' performance and salary progression link and how the school rewards good teaching.
- The governing body works with the school to ensure that finances are managed carefully and that the school's statutory duties are met, for example those for making sure pupils are safe and well cared for.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils work hard in lessons and are keen to do well. They enjoy their lessons, for example Years 5 and 6 pupils talked enthusiastically about the planetarium dome that they had explored in school. The work in their books is generally neat. They are increasingly confident in trying to solve problems with their work using specific strategies they have learned..
- Pupils are very polite and well mannered. Classroom routines are well established and pupils follow them. Pupils from different backgrounds are friendly to each other and enjoy working together. Pupils' behaviour around school and at break and lunchtimes is good. Younger pupils say the older ones are kind. Pupils in Year 5 take on the roles of play leaders at break and lunchtimes. The Year 6 pupils act as buddies for the children in the Reception class.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying. They say bullying or deliberate acts of unkindness are rare. If fall outs do occur, the pupils themselves normally resolve them. If problems do persist, the pupils say that the adults in school will help sort issues. No incidents of racist behaviour have been recorded since the previous inspection.
- Almost all pupils say that behaviour is good around school and in lessons. They do say that some pupils can be too chatty in lessons and this, on occasions, does disturb some of them.
- Pupils understand the rewards and sanctions systems in the school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils feel well looked after in school and highlight the new fencing as an example of the school's efforts to keep them safe.
- Pupils understand why they need to be careful when using social media websites or playing games online. The school has drawn on outside agencies, such as the police, to provide good guidance to pupils and parents on e-safety.
- Attendance in school has improved and is now broadly in line with the national average. The school works with parents to keep pupil absence down to a minimum.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- In the past, the quality of teaching has not been good enough and pupils have not achieved as well as they should have in reading, writing and mathematics. The high turnover in staff since the previous inspection has hindered the headteacher's efforts to make the quality of teaching better. Consequently, the improvements have been more recent and some remain a little inconsistent. However, teaching is becoming more effective. The progress the pupils make is now accelerating and is good in some year groups, but remains slower and inconsistent in others.
- Teachers identify to the pupils what they are learning in the lesson. They explain and model tasks so that pupils understand what they have to achieve by the end of a lesson. However, over time, the most-able have not received sufficient challenge in their work to ensure they achieve at the highest levels. The school recognises this as an aspect that requires further work.
- The school has successfully focused on improving the quality of pupils' writing. Pupils have the chance to write at length to develop their skills across a range of subject areas, including religious education, in all year groups.

- In the past, teachers have not ensured pupils have developed their basic understanding of mathematics quickly enough. The opportunity for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects is not well developed. As a result, pupils do not practise their basic skills to the same degree and their skills do not develop as quickly.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in class and in small group sessions. The information held by the school indicates pupils receiving additional support are now making better progress from their individual starting points than in the past. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, the teaching assistant provided excellent support to pupils and taught a concept that pupils were finding tricky, whilst the class focused on a different activity. As a result, the different groups of pupils were able to make progress on the task.
- Through good teaching of phonics (the sounds that are linked to groups of letters), pupils develop their reading skills well. Younger pupils are able to apply these skills when reading unfamiliar words. Older pupils read with fluency and expression.
- Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly. They provide pupils with good guidance and suggestions on how they could improve their work. Younger pupils are encouraged to re-write misspelled words or poorly formed letters, whilst older pupils are encouraged to extend their writing or correct calculation errors. Pupils are given time to make the necessary improvements, and do so.
- The senior leaders check the quality of teaching closely. They have provided support to staff when necessary to improve their skills. Teachers are now more accountable for the progress different groups of pupils make, and now check the progress their pupils make closely. Middle and senior leaders discuss this with them each half term to ensure pupils who may need additional support or further challenge receive it.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in national assessments at end of Year 6 has been below the national average for the past few years. It also dipped at the end of 2014 in Year 2. The progress most pupils have made in the past between Year 2 and Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics has also been too slow.
- In 2014, too few of the pupils in Year 6 achieved Level 5 in reading, writing or mathematics and none of the most-able pupils in the year group attained the highest possible standards in these subjects. This was well below the averages achieved by the most able pupils nationally. The school is now providing greater challenge and support to the most-able pupils. Adaptations in the way the school organises literacy and numeracy teaching in Key Stage 2 are helping the most-able pupils to make faster progress. This however requires further work to embed the improvements in all year groups.
- Evidence, as seen in the pupils' workbooks, indicates that pupils of different abilities are making much better progress this year, especially in writing, due to the better teaching that is now taking place. The school's own information also shows that pupils are now making better progress in reading and writing than in the past. However, pupils in most year groups still make less progress in mathematics.
- All pupils who read to the inspector said they enjoyed reading and that it helped them learn in other subject areas. The school is working to improve pupils comprehension skills so they can better understand what they are reading.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is improving. The support provided by class teachers and teaching is better co-ordinated and more effective. However, although some pupils make good progress, this is not yet consistent across all year groups. That said, the help provided for these pupils is enabling them to make better progress than in the past.
- Gaps in the skills of the very few disadvantaged pupils in writing and their understanding in mathematics when compared with the attainment of other pupils in school are closing in most year groups. The school is absolutely committed to removing any barriers that would prevent pupils from learning, and uses the additional resources it receives effectively.
- Well-targeted support helps pupils from different minority ethnic groups and those who do not speak English as their first language develop their language skills. As a result, they generally make good progress in literacy and numeracy from their individual starting points as they gain confidence and their skills in using English improves.

The early years provision

is good

- The leadership of the early years is good. The headteacher oversees the work of the team. A new teacher who joined the school in February 2015 coordinates the day-to-day planning and assessments. Adults work together to plan the next learning activities for different groups of children. If necessary activities are organised to help individual pupils develop particular skills for example in writing. Staff also record the children's progress in their 'learning journals' with photographs and written comments about what they have achieved. These are available for parents to review.
- Children join the Reception class with skills that are typical for their age. This can vary between cohorts. Through effective teaching children learn well and make good progress. The proportion who achieved a good level of development at the end of the Reception year was above average in 2014. Children are well prepared for the move into Year 1.
- The planned activities interest the children. The current topic of 'Construction' provided children with opportunities to compare the features of different materials. This prompted a good discussion facilitated by the high-level teaching assistant who was working with them. The girls were not shy about taking an active role in 'building' a house. They confidently drilled and sawed bricks as they recounted the tale of the 'Three Little Pigs'. Outdoor activities supported and mirrored the work being done in the classroom.
- The outdoor space, although quite small, provides plenty of opportunities for children to run around. The space is well resourced, with a range of interesting work areas. Both the work areas inside the classroom and outdoors do not have pictures or guides explaining what the children can do and learn in the activities. As a result, some children become a little confused as to what they have to do, which was the case with a group of children using a computer to find out about types of houses.
- The children are included in the assemblies and acts of worship. Their behaviour was excellent in the 'Crowning of Mary' celebration.
- The children behave well in class. They follow instructions and know the class routines. The children are happy to take turns when sharing equipment or items.
- The children are well cared for and kept safe in the Reception class. The procedures and policies relevant to the safeguarding of children in an early years setting are in place. The school has staff with the relevant training for first aid, and all members of the early years team have training to ensure the children are kept safe.
- The early years is not yet outstanding as, on occasions, some children are not always clear about what they have to do when working on their own.

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

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| Unique reference number | 123858 |
| Local authority | Somerset |
| Inspection number | 462470 |

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

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|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 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 | 122 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Hannah Hathaway |
| Headteacher | Alison Fishlock |
| Date of previous school inspection | 15–16 May 2013 |
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