

Inspection of St Catherine's Roman Catholic School

Pymore Road, Bridport, Dorset DT6 3TR

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

St Catherine's is a welcoming and caring school. Leaders place pupils' best interests at the centre of decisions they make. They encourage pupils to be resilient when facing challenges. As a result, pupils try hard and want to do well. Pupils know staff will go the 'extra mile for them'. However, pupils are not receiving a consistently high-quality experience of education across all classes and subjects. Leaders have made improvements, but there is more work to be done.

Pupils, including children in the early years, look forward to coming to school each day. Pupils behave respectfully towards each other and staff. Unkind comments and derogatory language between pupils are rare. Leaders use any such incidents to talk to pupils about making future positive choices. Children in Reception Year quickly learn to follow clear and established routines. They share and play cooperatively with others.

Leaders have strengthened the range of extra-curricular experiences that pupils can participate in, such as residential trips and clubs. Pupils are positive about the benefits of these. They are proud to represent the school in sporting competitions. Many pupils apply to be part of the chaplaincy GIFT team, which is a privilege they are offered when they join Year 5.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders are proud of the school. The headteacher has the confidence of the trust and wider community. She has led staff in making significant improvements since the previous inspection. These are starting to benefit pupils in some areas of the school's work. However, there are still too many inconsistencies in the quality of education that pupils receive. Leaders do not always take effective action to make improvements. Therefore, some weaker aspects persist.

Pupils follow a broad curriculum. Teachers take a collaborative approach to planning for each subject and have considered the knowledge they want pupils to learn in most subjects. The development of pupils' communication and language skills is a key thread through the curriculum. However, in some subjects, this is not detailed enough.

Staff complete some checks of pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, in mathematics, a 'Four for Friday' reviews current and previous learning. Despite this, teachers' use of assessment across subjects does not routinely identify misconceptions. Therefore, teaching is not adapted to respond to what pupils know and can do well enough.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported by staff. Leaders provide important information about pupils with SEND to all staff. They use this to plan pupils' learning carefully. Staff review set targets regularly. Incorporating the views of parents and pupils is an important part of this process.

Children start to learn to read as soon as they join Reception Year. They follow a structured phonics curriculum and read books that are well matched to the sounds they know. Leaders use regular assessment to gauge how well children are learning to read. However, the teaching of phonics is not precise enough and some learning time is lost. Adults supporting children with their reading do not always guide them effectively.

Children in the early years enjoy positive relationships with staff. They benefit from a balance of free choice and adult-led activities. However, the planning and implementation of the curriculum does not take into account whether children learn at the appropriate age or stage.

The curriculum supports pupils' wider personal development. It encourages them to be physically active. For example, pupils participate in forest school and often complete the daily mile. Leaders recognise that some pupils need extra help to cope with their anxiety. A trained member of staff leads a 'time to talk' club to support them. Pupils are confident in their understanding of fundamental British values. They bring these to life through school celebrations for important events, such as the King's coronation.

Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of the protected characteristics. They understand the importance of treating everyone equally. Pupils live up to leaders' high expectations of behaviour. This is supported by sports ambassadors who are positive role models and set up games and activities for pupils at playtimes. Staff also know the needs of pupils well. Combined, this promotes positive behaviour during unstructured times.

Staff enjoy working at St Catherine's. They describe a 'family feel', where staff support each other. Although there are some opportunities for staff to develop their subject expertise, this learning is not always shared more widely, so the impact is limited.

Parents are positive about the school. They appreciate the improvements that leaders have made to date. Some parents say that communication between school and home could be strengthened.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are confident in how to report and record any concerns about a pupil. All staff, including governors, receive regular and purposeful training. For example, staff consider case studies and discuss how they would respond.

Leaders take swift action to ensure pupils are safe. This involves working effectively with parents and external services as appropriate.

Pupils understand the risks they could face. This includes when online, such as through social media or gaming. They are safe in school and are confident to talk to trusted adults.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The core knowledge that pupils need to learn has not been planned in detail, or communicated to teachers, in some subjects of the curriculum. Therefore, pupils do not always build secure, consistent knowledge in these areas. Leaders should ensure that curriculum planning identifies the explicit knowledge that pupils should be taught in all subjects.
- Teachers' use of assessment is not always well planned or used to check for misconceptions. Therefore, leaders and teachers do not know how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that high-quality assessment is in place for all subject areas.
- Leaders do not know how well the planned curriculum is implemented. As a result, some weaker practice persists. Leaders must ensure that they have an accurate understanding of the quality of education that pupils receive and that they rectify any weak practice rapidly.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	140757
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10268210
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	119
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ruth O'Donovan
Headteacher	Sarah Terrey
Website	www.stcatherinesbridport.dorset.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher joined the school in March 2020.
- St Catherine's is a Roman Catholic School. The last section 48 inspection took place in March 2023.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, the early years lead, members of the local governing body, the education and standards manager and the director of education for the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of

pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke with leaders about the curriculum in science and physical education.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader to consider how well the school identifies pupils who are at risk and engages with external services. Inspectors also spoke with a range of pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Kelly Olive, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Laura Bennett

Ofsted Inspector

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