

St Martin de Porres Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	103467
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	376913
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2012
Lead inspector	Michael Bartleman

This inspection of the school 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	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Drugan
Headteacher	Jackie Tomlinson
Date of previous school inspection	18 October 2006
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Telephone number	0121 4645500
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	20–21 March 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Michael Bartleman

Additional inspector

Roisin Chambers

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons for a total of nine hours, observing nine different teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, parents and carers, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including school data on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the school's self-evaluation. They analysed questionnaires from 68 parents and carers, as well as those completed by a sample of staff and pupils.

Information about the school

This is a slightly smaller than average-sized primary school serving a culturally and socially diverse area which has changed significantly since the previous inspection. Pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds; the largest proportion being of Pakistani heritage. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is higher than the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those with a statement of needs, is average. The school meets the government's current floor standard which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

The school has achieved National Support School status, with the headteacher being a National Leader in Education, it has the Eco-schools bronze award and National Healthy School status.

There is a before-school club managed by the governing body.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is a good school; exceptionally well led and fuelled by a passion to ‘nurture excellence’. There is sustained improvement; standards have risen and the quality of teaching has improved. The school is not outstanding because progress in mathematics is not as rapid as it is in English and teaching is not consistently outstanding.
- Pupils make good progress from below age-expected starting points on entry to Reception to broadly average attainment by the end of Year 6. Pupils make better progress in English where attainment is a little higher than in mathematics.
- Teaching is consistently good. Clear guidance about learning is usually given, although occasionally work is not matched closely enough to pupils needs. Even so, most pupils know what to do to improve their work. Small group work is highly effective and produces rapid gains in learning.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils and their parents and carers say that the school is a safe and friendly place. Most pupils behave well, are sensitive to each other’s different cultures and opinions, and are kind and respectful to staff and to visitors. However, a small number are sometimes not sufficiently confident and independent in their learning. Attendance has improved through the school’s concerted actions and is above average.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher is supported ably by senior leaders, a well-led governing body and effective subject leaders. The outstanding curriculum has an excellent impact on the promotion of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are given time to think through issues. This practice promotes a spirit of enquiry, developing them as reflective citizens. Teaching is exceptionally well managed and staff receive highly focused professional development and support to enhance their skills.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2013, increase the proportion of teaching which is outstanding by:
 - precisely matching activities to the stage pupils have reached
 - ensuring pupils become confident independent learners as they move through the school.

- By July 2013, improve pupils' year-on-year achievement in mathematics to that reached in reading and writing by:
 - ensuring teachers 'model' calculations and verbalise the process at every opportunity
 - ensuring there is a balance between teacher talk and pupil activity which maximises learning opportunities during mathematics lessons.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Until recently, standards in Year 6 have been average reflecting good progress from pupils' starting points. An increase in the amount of outstanding teaching and improvements in school leadership are accelerating progress and standards are improving rapidly throughout the school. In reading, pupils' attainment is above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, with increasing numbers attaining the higher levels. The impact of the rigorous phonics programme (linking sounds and letters) and well-structured guided reading sessions are evident in pupils' attainment and enjoyment of reading.

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are generally below expected levels for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Their social skills, attitudes to learning and speaking skills develop rapidly within the warm and purposeful atmosphere. Children currently in the Reception classes are on course to reach the expected goals across all areas of learning. Attainment at the end of Year 2 was above average in 2011, showing the school's improving impact and developing capacity. Work in books and current assessment evidence unmistakably show that pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are making at least good and sustained progress from their starting points. An increasing proportion of pupils is making outstanding progress in English and mathematics. This was evident in a Year 4 mathematics lesson where pupils were able to explain clearly two-digit calculations following the class teacher's explanations and modelling. Pupils were engrossed in the activities, which allowed the teacher to extend the more-able pupils. By the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils attaining or exceeding the expected level in English and in mathematics is broadly average and rapidly increasing. Previous underachievement at Key Stage 2 has been robustly tackled and eradicated for all groups of pupils.

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Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, as well as those at an early stage of learning English, are supported well by highly skilled teaching assistants and make similar progress to other groups of pupils. The school works well to help individual pupils to overcome specific academic and emotional barriers to their learning. This helps to minimise and close any gaps between what these pupils are achieving and what is expected of them nationally.

The vast majority of parents and carers state that they are happy with the progress their children are making at the school. Transition arrangements for pupils leaving and joining the school are well developed. One parent commented, 'My child has been given a great start in life due to the love and commitment of the staff at St Martin de Porres.'

Quality of teaching

Inspection findings confirm the views of the school that teaching is consistently good, with some at Key Stage 2 and in the Early Years Foundation Stage being outstanding. Parents and carers and pupils also believe that teaching is good. Teaching is well planned, effective and often practical and collaborative, so that most pupils make good progress. In the Early Years Foundation Stage children enjoy school. There is a good balance of child-initiated and adult-supported tasks and effective use of the indoor and outdoor environments. Teachers 'grab' pupils' interest quickly with well-resourced and lively introductions which develop curiosity and make learning fun. For example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson, pupils excitedly tried to identify the key features of an imaginative story in 'talk partners' before describing their pirate character. Pupils were effectively challenged to use higher level connectives and punctuation. Small group work led by teachers and teaching assistants is particularly effective at moving learning forward. This was seen in an outstanding phonics lesson in Reception where the teacher and adults used resources, including 'netbooks', well to develop children's knowledge. Pupils learnt rapidly because of the clarity of the activities, effective partner discussions and excellent questioning. Teachers know pupils and their capabilities well, but do not always set tasks which match their learning needs exactly or develop independent skills. In a few lessons, the lack of balance between teacher talk and pupils' independent activities does not maximise learning opportunities. Guided sessions have been particularly effective in rapidly raising and sustaining attainment in reading and writing. The format is now being used in mathematics with equal success. The development of writing skills has improved greatly with good opportunities for extended writing, particularly during spring term's 'Big Write'.

Teachers ensure that pupils know what they are going to learn and have opportunities to review their success. Work is marked regularly and, together with oral feedback, is helping pupils to understand the quality of their work and what they have to do next to improve. Target setting is effective and well used particularly in English. The emphasis on the school's ethos and values through teaching and the wider curriculum reinforces pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including their respect for each other, their learning and their self-esteem.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour and safety are good. In lessons and around the school, behaviour is at least good and sometimes it is outstanding. For example, outstanding behaviour was seen during the prayer service and in a few lessons. A small minority of parents and carers raised concerns about behaviour and bullying. School records support the view that behaviour over time is good and there are good systems in place to help pupils who sometimes find behaving well a challenge. Pupils say that any cases of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively. Older pupils are aware that bullying can exist in a variety of forms, including cyber-bullying and through the use of the internet.

Pupils are polite and courteous and treat each other with respect. Clear guidelines and effective use of rewards help ensure that pupils know what is acceptable. They manage potential risks well by moving around the school in an orderly manner, particularly up and down stairs. The school is a harmonious community where, as one parent put it, 'Every child feels valued.' Pupils make a good contribution to the school through the school council, setting up the hall for assemblies and acting as buddies.

Strong links with external agencies, together with staff who know their pupils well and a caring ethos, help ensure that pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable receive the support they need. Attendance has improved due to the school's concerted efforts and is now above average; most pupils arrive punctually. The before-school breakfast club is well run, provides good pastoral care for those who attend and is appreciated by parents and carers.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are highly effective. Staff share the headteacher's vision for the school and work collectively with the leadership team to promote a relentless drive towards excellence. Morale is very high. Every aspect of the school's work is subject to regular and detailed scrutiny, ensuring that self-evaluation is accurate and that well-planned action leads to swift and sustained improvement. This is evidenced by rapidly rising standards in English and mathematics, improved attendance and the well-developed thematic curriculum. The governing body knows the school well and contributes to its success through its support, the challenge it provides to leaders and ensuring that statutory requirements, particularly for safeguarding, are rigorously met. For these reasons, the school has excellent capacity to sustain improvement.

Highly effective and well-planned professional development and opportunities for staff to learn from one another promote enthusiastic and imaginative teaching. This has led to an increase in the number of outstanding lessons. Meticulous monitoring of pupils' work by leaders and their direct observation of lessons ensure that the most effective approaches are securely embedded in all classes and that staff receive

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precise guidance to help them to improve their practice. This has resulted in a team whose members are fully committed to evaluating their own practice and improving pupils' attainment. They also support the headteacher in her role as a National Leader of Education. The rigorous analysis of school data has enabled staff effectively to tackle underachievement. Leaders and the governing body promote equality of opportunity extremely well and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Parents and carers see that their children are at the heart of everything that the school does. The school engages very well with parents and carers to ensure that they are active partners in their children's learning.

The school promotes an outstanding, rich and varied curriculum that is continuing to develop. Regular themed weeks, for example, Mission Week, including visiting theatre groups, are thoroughly enjoyed by the pupils and effectively focus learning. Well-planned enrichment activities, including whole family visits to the seaside and partnerships with schools in contrasting settings, give pupils an understanding of what life is like for children whose backgrounds are different from their own. Links with local businesses and visiting speakers give pupils an insight into the world of work and raise aspirations. Class visits help to develop pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures and have a good impact on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils make the most of their cultural heritage during Black History Month which celebrates the diversity within the school. There are many popular extra-curricular clubs which promote learning and enjoyment in sporting, arts and environmental activities.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



22 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Martin de Porres Catholic Primary School, Birmingham, B13 9DN

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you, reading your questionnaires and hearing what you had to say about your school. We were pleased to hear about how you enjoy everything the school has to offer you. We were impressed with how polite and friendly you are. Most of you have positive attitudes to your work and to each other and readily accept the school's ethos and values.

You go to a good school. There are many good things about your school, such as the welcoming atmosphere, your enjoyment of reading and the good progress you make across the school to reach average standards by Year 6. Your attendance has improved and is now above average – well done!

Your teachers look after you well and try to make your lessons fun, although occasionally some activities are not challenging or exciting enough. You told us that you look forward to coming to school because you like your teachers, the after-school clubs and visits. Most of your parents and carers like the school too.

To make sure that all of you make even better progress, we have asked your headteacher and other school leaders to:

- ensure the progress you make in mathematics is as good as that you make in reading and writing.
- make sure that teachers always give you work that is interesting and appropriate for your ability or need and which will help you to make the best possible progress.

You can help by continuing to behave well and trying hard in your lessons.

Yours sincerely

Michael Bartleman
Lead inspector

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