

# St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Blue Lane East, Walsall, WS2 8HN

**Inspection dates** 7–8 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- High numbers of teachers have left or joined the school recently which has made the quality of teaching patchy.
- Teaching requires improvement. While there is a proportion of good teaching, in many lessons pupils find work too hard or too easy.
- Not enough pupils make fast enough progress to reach the higher levels in English and mathematics because they do not get enough opportunities to write at length or apply what they know to solve problems in mathematics.
- Leadership and management require improvement. Subject leaders and teachers are not held to account for pupils' progress and the standards they reach. The governing body is not doing enough to hold school leaders to account for pupils' achievement.
- Leaders' monitoring of lessons and checking on pupils' work does not focus sharply enough on how well pupils learn and is not rigorous enough in identifying weaknesses that need to be improved.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teaching is good and their teachers have high expectations.
- Reading is a strong area of the school's work. Pupils read a wide range of books. Younger pupils use their knowledge of phonics (the sounds letters make) to tackle unknown words.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and at play. They know how to keep safe and have positive attitudes to learning.
- Attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 is getting better and is now broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons or parts of lessons plus several guided reading activities. Groups of pupils also read individually to inspectors.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including: the school's own data on recent and current progress; samples of pupils' work; planning and monitoring information; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the five responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 10 questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Sonja Joseph, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Westall

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding to support pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported by school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the teaching staff and senior leadership structure, including, more recently, the appointment of a deputy headteacher and a special educational needs coordinator. Over 50% of staff are new to the school.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to at least good or better by ensuring that:
  - teaching is consistently good or better in all classes by raising teachers' expectations for the more-able pupils
  - information gained from checks on pupils' progress is used to plan work that is well matched to pupils' abilities, particularly for the more-able pupils
  - each lesson builds on and develops the learning from previous lessons
  - pupils are encouraged to be more active and inquisitive in lessons
  - teachers ask searching questions that develop pupils' understanding and encourage their thinking.
- Improve pupils' progress and raise achievement in English and mathematics by:
  - teaching pupils to use their writing skills in a range of subjects and helping them to write progressively lengthier pieces in a variety of styles
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills and knowledge so they can solve problems.
- Strengthen leadership and management, including governance, by:
  - ensuring that all staff are more accountable for their pupils' achievement
  - improving the way senior leaders check and evaluate how well teachers help pupils to make good progress in lessons
  - ensuring that the monitoring of teaching is rigorous enough to identify shortcomings and resolve them
  - supporting some newly appointed subject leaders to develop their skills for checking the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects
  - ensuring that the governing body more effectively holds the school to account over all aspects of school performance and pupils' progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are generally below the levels expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. As a result of good teaching they make good progress and by the time they enter Year 1 most pupils are working at the levels expected of them.
- Progress continues to be good through Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 2 attainment is broadly average. Current school data and checks on pupils' work show that writing is steadily improving as a result of specific targeted individual and small group teaching programmes.
- Typically, standards by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics have been in line with national averages. However, standards fell in 2011, which galvanised the school into taking action to raise attainment. In 2012, there was considerable improvement and standards were closer to national averages. The rise in attainment is continuing and pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards have not improved fast enough because many teachers are new to the school and this has slowed down the process of developing a consistent approach to raising achievement across the school.
- The progress that most pupils make is broadly that expected of them. Many make less than good progress because teachers do not always pay enough attention to matching work to pupils' individual abilities, particularly for the more able. In addition, they do not always check carefully enough the progress pupils have made in lessons.
- Overall progress in mathematics is not yet fast enough to ensure all, especially the more able, make good progress. Pupils' books show there is too little opportunity to use and apply mathematical skills and develop the ability to solve problems.
- Not enough pupils reach the higher levels in writing, mainly because they are not given work which is hard enough and they are not provided with enough opportunities to write long pieces of work.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium generally make similar progress in writing and mathematics to others in the school. Pupil premium funding is helping to pay for additional staff to work on developing pupils' reading skills. As a result, pupils read regularly and enjoy a range of texts, using their phonic skills (linking letters and sounds) well. This is helping many pupils to make faster progress in this aspect of learning. For instance, the average points score in national tests at the end of Year 6 for pupils in receipt of free school meals is similar to all other pupils in the school.
- The attainment of pupils from the different minority ethnic groups and those new to learning English is getting better. This is partly due to the different actions taken, such as the reading, writing and spelling programme, which develops their ability to form sentences and use new words when speaking. Teachers make good use of pictures and images and this helps pupils better understand the tasks they are given. This was seen in a Year 2 lesson where the teacher's good use of images and real objects enabled the pupils to be clear about what they were learning during the lesson.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported to make similar progress to others across the school. Skilled teaching assistants provide additional support so that these pupils' needs are catered for using a range of resources within lessons.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time requires improvement because there is still some inconsistency between classes in Key Stages 1 and 2 and not enough is good or outstanding.
- Where teaching requires improvement, teachers talk for too long and this limits the amount of time pupils have to work by themselves on the tasks set. On these occasions, the pace of

learning is slow and some pupils become restless and go off task.

- In some lessons, teachers do not use information from checks on pupils' progress to inform their planning. As a result, the work set does not always match the wide range of pupils' abilities and there is not enough challenge, particularly for the more-able pupils, to develop their thinking skills.
- In some mathematics lessons, there is not enough focus on investigation and practical problem solving to ensure pupils gain confidence in handling numbers. In literacy, there are not enough opportunities for extended writing with a clear purpose across all subjects.
- Although teaching is not consistently good, there are examples of effective teaching in all Key Stages. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is predominantly good because the teachers plan a wide range of activities to promote children's learning and development. For example, in one session children enjoyed filling different sized containers with water. The teacher joined in and helped the children talk about which held more so that they learnt both mathematics and good ways of speaking.
- In the most effective lessons, skilful questioning by the teacher checks pupils' understanding and contributes to their good progress. Pupils know what they are expected to achieve because teachers give them clear criteria to measure their learning against and refer to these frequently during the lesson. Pupils make fast progress when learning is broken down into manageable steps and builds on what they already know and can do. However, this good practice is patchy and is not commonplace across the school.
- Reading is taught well. The skills learned in the Nursery and Reception classes are built upon effectively and pupils quickly gain confidence to read new books and other reading material. They have access in school to a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books, which broaden their reading. Teachers often use good questioning skills to probe and extend pupils' understanding of what they are reading.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support less-able and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, helping them to make similar progress to their classmates. Staff are well briefed about what the pupils need to learn and do. They work enthusiastically with the pupils to raise their self-esteem by providing work that challenges them but is achievable.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Typically, behaviour is good. Pupils behave well and say that lessons are hardly ever disrupted by any poor behaviour. Staff have established consistent and rigorous procedures for managing behaviour. Consequently, the school is a harmonious environment. There have been very few exclusions in recent years.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are not outstanding because there are a few pupils who become inattentive and lose concentration when the pace of learning is slow.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn the rules for good behaviour quickly and show independence as they choose activities for themselves. They persevere well with their tasks and cooperate well with one another.
- Pupils have a good understanding of all forms of bullying. They recognise concerns regarding internet safety and the issues connected with social networking. They are confident that there are numerous adults to talk to if they have any worries.
- The curriculum provides many opportunities to explore whether the actions of others are right or wrong, thus making a good contribution to pupils' social and moral development.
- The school is an orderly and happy place and pupils are looked after well. Vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well in their personal and emotional development.
- Attendance is above average and is improving, showing that pupils enjoy coming to school. There is little persistent absence because school leaders tackle it firmly.

## The leadership and management requires improvement

- Although improving, leadership and management are not yet good. While effective action has been taken to tackle the weakest teaching, leaders have not ensured that all teaching is good. Many recent improvements have not been sustained over an extended period of time. Nevertheless, the headteacher and senior leaders share a determination that the school will continue to improve.
- Following the last inspection, significant staff turnover and changes of senior leadership slowed the rate of improvement. However, actions taken have contributed to a steady improvement in pupils' achievement at both key stages.
- The school's checks on how well it is doing have led senior leaders to accurately recognise that the school needs to do even better. Tracking of pupils' progress is improving so that staff have a clearer understanding of where help is needed to raise attainment. They have identified that the more-able pupils make slower progress in writing and mathematics than others and have suitable plans to close these gaps in performance.
- Funding to support pupils who need extra help, especially the pupil premium, is used effectively to deliver specific actions such as the reading and spelling improvement programme, one-to-one support and small group booster activities. These have resulted in improved attainment in reading, which is currently above nationally expected levels.
- A number of staff with particular leadership roles are relatively new to their posts and have not had time to fully contribute to school improvement or to the process of checking the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility. New and less experienced staff are supported well by senior leaders through mentoring and relevant training, which has contributed to the improvement in pupils' achievement.
- New plans and systems are in place to ensure that increases in teachers' pay are linked with improving teaching and raising pupils' achievement but these are not yet fully up and running in order to hold staff fully to account for pupils' achievement.
- Although leaders regularly check on teaching, it focuses too much on how teachers teach rather than on how well pupils of different abilities learn. As a result, this leads to some weaknesses not being sufficiently identified or resolved.
- The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of well-attended extra-curricular clubs and activities which promote well pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is a particular strength and provides a good balance of activities that are led by adults and those chosen by the children.
- There is strong support for the school from the local authority. The school improvement advisor visits the school to gauge performance and to support leaders in their quest to improve teaching and accelerate pupils' achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body ensures that the safeguarding of pupils meets current requirements and both staff and governor training in relation to child protection is fully up to date. However, the governing body has not been sufficiently rigorous in challenging and holding leaders to account for the standards achieved and current inconsistencies in teaching. The governing body has an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and has taken action to strengthen the procedures for monitoring teachers' performance. They have not been afraid to make difficult decisions about when to move teachers up the pay scale. As a consequence, no teachers have moved higher on the pay scale than is appropriate. However, governors have been more reticent in questioning and challenging senior leaders about how well pupils do.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104233
<b>Local authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	400697
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary-aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	232
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Wendy Jevon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Gregory Gilroy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26–27 January 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01922 720063
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