

St Philip's Catholic Primary School

Messenger Road, Smethwick, B66 3DU

Inspection dates 20–21 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- St Philip's is a good school and rapidly improving. It is well respected by the local community.
- Good leadership and management have improved the overall effectiveness since the last inspection. Teaching has improved to good because of the effective action by leaders and governors. As a result, pupils' achievement is now good.
- Well-planned lessons taught by teachers, supported by well-trained assistants, meet all pupils' needs, including those of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, who achieve well.
- Parents and carers believe the school provides a good education for their children and prepares them well for the future.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they say they feel safe in school. They are proud of their school and represent it well within the community. They are polite towards each other and adults. Their attendance is above average.
- The governing body is well organised and fulfils all its duties well. It provides the school with a good level of support and monitors the school's effectiveness closely. Governors are not afraid to challenge the school when required to do so and/or make crucial decisions.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' marking does not always ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do in order to improve their work.
- Examples of outstanding teaching are not shared sufficiently among the staff as a whole.
- The pace of learning in a minority of lessons is too slow and hinders progress.
- The new team of subject leaders has not as yet had sufficient time fully to monitor their areas of responsibility.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 19 lessons taught by eight teachers; 14 of these were joint observations with the acting headteacher or consultant headteacher.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at documentation including the school's self-evaluation, school development planning, teachers' planning, school tracking data about the progress of individual pupils, performance management documentation, minutes of governing body meetings and a range of other school policy documents.
- The inspectors also listened to pupils of different ages reading and made short observations of sessions on the teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds).
- Discussions were held with the acting headteacher and consultant headteacher, two members of the governing body, staff and pupils. A meeting also took place with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures and documentation.
- As only six parents responded to the Ofsted online Parent View survey, this information could not be viewed. However, the inspectors did take account of 72 responses to the school's own questionnaire held just prior to the inspection. They also took account of the views of school staff in the 14 completed questionnaires.

Inspection team

Ronald Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mary Usher-Clark

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Philip's is an average size primary school.
- The headteacher is currently on leave of absence and the school is being led by an acting headteacher, supported by a consultant headteacher.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium provides funding for children in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those with a parent or carer in the armed forces.
- The percentage of pupils from a minority ethnic background is well above average. Almost half the pupils in school speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average but the proportion on school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above the national average. These needs include speech, language and communication and social and emotional difficulties.
- Children attending the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one Nursery and one Reception class.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of leadership and management by providing greater opportunities for subject leaders to be more involved in tracking the effectiveness of the school's work.
- Raise the percentage of outstanding teaching by:
 - making sure that all teachers' marking allows pupils to know how they can improve their work
 - making sure that the pace of all lessons matches that of the best in school
 - using the excellent practice already in the school to inspire the other teachers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are generally well below those normally expected for their age. Good quality teaching and interesting learning activities allow children to make good progress within the Early Years Foundation Stage, which means they are well prepared to move into Key Stage 1.
- Good progress continues throughout the school and pupils' attainment by the time they leave the school is above average in both English and mathematics. School data indicate that current pupils' attainment is on course to rise still further in this year's national tests. The proportion of pupils who make and exceed their expected progress now compares favourably with the national average, although this has not been consistently so over time.
- Improved teaching is securing good progress for all pupils, especially disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. These pupils make accelerated progress across the whole school from their individual starting points. This is due to the careful planning and well-focused work presented by the teachers and other adults who support their learning.
- Pupils' attainment in reading is above average. Regular guided reading sessions, supported by good phonics teaching, are also aiding their writing skills. In a Year 3 lesson taught by an assistant, pupils used their knowledge of letters and sounds to read text and identify words that contained a range of sounds, which they then identified in a number of words and extended text.
- In a Year 4 numeracy lesson pupils demonstrated their understanding of a range of triangles, their angles and general characteristics. Progress in this lesson was outstanding due to the imaginative and highly paced manner in which it was taught.
- The pupils who benefit from the pupil premium funding reach similar levels of attainment to other pupils in the school in both English and mathematics, reflected in their national tests. The school's data indicate that the pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to continue the school's upward trend.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress in line with their peers in school. This is again due to the way in which all staff make sure the needs of all pupils are met. Teaching is at its best for pupils learning to speak English when their home language can be used to promote confidence.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good over time and this is reflected in pupils' consistently good progress in all year groups. It is also reflected in records of checks on teaching by school leaders and external advisors. The vast majority of teaching observed during the inspection was good. Some was outstanding.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently good. The two classrooms and the outdoor area, which make up the Early Years Foundation Stage, are well resourced, colourful and spacious. As a consequence, children enjoy their first experiences of school and develop a positive attitude to learning.

- Pupils say they enjoy lessons because teachers match work well to their different abilities and make learning interesting. As a result, pupils work hard and make good progress.
- An example of this was observed during an outstanding Year 6 mathematics lesson. The teacher gained the attention of the class by constantly challenging them as individuals, developed a fast pace to learning and used excellent self-assessment to make sure the pupils knew how to improve. However, this is not always the case and in the small minority of lessons where teaching is not as strong the pace of learning is not as fast and so progress slows.
- Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils in their classes. Pupils are confident that teachers and other adults always help them if they are having difficulties. However, although there have been some improvements in the quality of teachers' marking since the last inspection, this is still not consistently providing pupils with sufficient information on how to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are well behaved and have positive attitudes to learning. School records show that this good behaviour is a regular feature of the school. They generally work with sustained concentration in lessons. Very occasionally, there is some low-level inappropriate behaviour, such as chatting to each other, which is very well managed by the teachers. However, this indicates that not all pupils are yet fully able to manage their own behaviour in lessons.
- When pupils are playing outside, moving around the school or interacting with each other and adults, pupils say that behaviour is always good which reflects the school's clear focus on developing the pupils' very strong moral, social, cultural and religious awareness.
- Parents are positive about behaviour. In discussions, pupils said that behaviour is typically good and there is no bullying of any kind, including physical, emotional and cyber bullying.
- All pupils, including the very youngest, feel safe and very secure. They report that they are well looked after and they are adamant that adults at the school will deal with any problems they may have quickly.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe and pupils were both eager and able to explain how they attend activities out of school which help to keep them fit. They also explained how they make sure they are safe on the internet when at home.

The leadership and management are good

- The acting headteacher, who is well supported by one of the headteachers from the local group of schools, provides strong leadership and has made sure the school is continuing to improve. They have worked well with the staff and governing body to ensure that the school has developed and maintained a firm understanding of its strengths and areas in need of improvement.
- Good leadership and management, including the leadership of teaching, have enabled the school to improve its overall effectiveness since the last inspection. The school received good support

from the local authority following the last inspection to aid its improvement. Now, it rightly provides light touch support and considers that the school provides pupils with a good education and demonstrates good capacity for further improvement.

- The substantive headteacher has built a subject leadership team but the staff involved are all relatively new to the school and so have not as yet had sufficient time and/or the opportunity to have an effect on school improvement.
 - The school has developed effective procedures to manage the performance of staff and uses these well to ensure that staff benefit from appropriate professional development in order continuously to improve the quality of teaching. However, the school does not as yet use the best teaching already in the school as an example to the others.
 - The school tracks the progress of individual pupils well to ensure that all make the progress they are capable of. Pupils identified as being in need of help with their work are quickly provided with the support they need to improve their progress and close the learning gap between them and other pupils.
 - A scrutiny of pupils' work confirmed that the school has developed a curriculum designed to make learning interesting and enjoyable for pupils. The curriculum has an excellent impact on children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and also provides pupils with a range of rich learning experiences aimed at increasing their understanding of the local area and the wider world in which they live.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides the school with an effective level of support and challenge. Governors are not afraid to make crucial decisions, as demonstrated by their bold decision to appoint an acting headteacher, supported by a consultant headteacher. This decision was made to make sure the positive improvements made to the school were maintained with the substantive headteacher on leave.
 - The governing body is fully involved in school life and fulfils its statutory duties well, including its responsibilities for ensuring the safety and welfare of pupils. It is committed to making sure the school prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. As a result, governors have a realistic understanding of how well the school is doing in comparison to other primary schools, by using a wide range of school and national data.
 - Individual governors play a crucial role in school life and closely monitor the school's finances, including how effectively the school uses the money it receives to improve the progress of pupils entitled to extra help from the pupil premium.
 - The governing body works closely with the school to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed and that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
 - Governors receive regular training about their role. The governing body also closely checks on the quality of teaching and links this appropriately to staff salary levels.
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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	104001
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	400679

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	248
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendell Gopaul
Headteacher	Stephen Murphy
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2010
Telephone number	0121 558 1643
Fax number	0121 558 9198
Email address	headteacher@st-philips.sandwell.sch.uk

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