

St Pancras Catholic Primary School

De Montfort Road, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1SR

Inspection dates 26–27 June 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.

- Since the last inspection, teaching has improved and is now consistently good and is outstanding in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils make good progress across the school, to reach standards which are above average, particularly in reading and mathematics. Their achievement is good.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. The standards they reach are above average.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language quickly develop their confidence in speaking and listening. They make exceptional progress and quickly achieve at least as well as other pupils.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy their learning. They get along very well and make sure that everyone feels welcome.
- Pupils feel very safe at school because the environment is well organised and they say adults care about them a great deal.
- The headteacher has made sure that teachers know what they need to do to improve teaching, and that key issues are identified and improved to raise standards.
- Together with the governing body, the headteacher has minimised the impact of changes of staff.
- Governors are well trained to ensure they fulfil their statutory duties and can evaluate the performance of the school in relation to that of other schools.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While standards in writing have also improved, they are not yet as high as those in reading and mathematics.
- The helpful systems for setting targets for pupils are not used consistently by all teachers.
- After several changes in staff, too much of the responsibility for keeping track of the progress of pupils and for improving teaching rests with the headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 12 lessons taught by six teachers, as well as work with small groups of pupils taken by teaching assistants. A third of these observations were undertaken together with the headteacher.
- The inspector held meetings with senior leaders, governors, teachers and pupils. He reviewed the school's records about the performance of the pupils and looked at school documents about keeping pupils safe, as well as plans to identify and tackle any issues.
- Teachers' plans for lessons, their records tracking the progress pupils are making and the work pupils do in their books, were reviewed in light of the progress they were making in the lessons observed. Pupils' views about the work they were doing and the progress they make were considered.
- The inspector reviewed the 39 responses to Parent View, the online survey for Ofsted, as well as correspondence received. The inspector met informally with several parents to discuss their views. The views of staff about the work of the school were considered, through discussions and their responses to questionnaires.
- On the second day of the inspection, pupils and staff from Year 4 and Year 5 were away on a school trip.

Inspection team

Andrew Saunders, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized school with mixed-age classes in all year groups except for Year 6, who are taught separately.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from a wide range of other backgrounds is average, although above average in some year groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average. These pupils speak a wide range of other languages at home. Some of these pupils join the school with little or no knowledge of English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is slightly above average, particularly so in some year groups. The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average; the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. This is funding allocated by the government to support the learning of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority or children of services families.
- There have been several changes in staffing over the past year. Far more pupils than usual join or leave the school other than at the expected times.
- In 2012, the school met the floor standards, the minimum expectations set by the government for the attainment and progress of pupils in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of pupils reaching the very highest standards, particularly in writing for more able pupils, by:
 - developing the teaching of linking letters and the sounds they make (phonics) with older pupils to increase their confidence in spelling complex words
 - making sure that all pupils, and particularly younger pupils, benefit from high-quality comments in teachers marking so they know what to do to improve and have enough opportunities to respond to these comments
 - giving pupils greater independence in deciding when they have reached their targets, and in being more involved in setting the next targets they need to work towards.
- Make sure that leaders across the school are more effective in identifying and driving improvements, by:
 - taking greater responsibility for collecting and analysing the evidence about pupils' progress
 - leading the development of teaching within their areas of responsibility so that more teaching is outstanding.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- After a dip in the results at the end of Year 6 two years ago, the attainment of pupils has been rising again to the previous above-average levels. The pupils currently in Year 6 are well placed to reach levels which are above average, particularly in reading and mathematics. Attainment in writing has also risen and is slightly above average.
- From their starting points, this means these pupils have made good progress. Observations of lessons, work in pupils' books and the records of teachers show that this good progress is typical across the school, and over time. The school focus on reading and mathematics mean that progress in these areas has accelerated over the past two years. Progress in writing has also improved, but more slowly.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels is above average, but more pupils are capable of reaching the very highest standards, particularly in their writing. Recent strategies to address this issue are beginning to have an impact and, increasingly, more is being expected of younger pupils.
- Most parents and pupils said that they feel learning is effective. Pupils like the fact that they have targets to work towards, but these are not always used frequently enough to focus the work pupils are given to do. Pupils do not get enough opportunities to decide for themselves when they have achieved their targets, or what they should be aiming for next in their learning.
- Pupils joining the school in Reception often have skills and knowledge which are below those typical for their age. Some join the school speaking no English. Whatever their ability, they quickly develop good skills as learners and establish good habits of cooperation and self-reflection because the teaching and resources in the Early Years Foundation Stage are strengths of the school. They make excellent progress and are well placed to continue learning.
- There is a well-established approach to teaching phonics, particularly in the younger year groups. These pupils quickly become confident readers. Older pupils do not always benefit from this structured approach and this means they are not always confident in spelling the ambitious words they want to use and, at times, this constrains their progress in writing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar good progress to their peers because they are supported effectively by teaching assistants and get additional support when they need it. Their progress is carefully tracked and discussed. However, too much of this analysis relies on the headteacher.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make outstanding progress because the teachers and other pupils help them become confident to try their new language skills, and value their contributions. The school makes excellent use of a wide range of partners outside the school to help these pupils succeed.
- Pupils from different backgrounds, and those who join the school other than at the usual times, are helped to settle in quickly, feel very welcome in the school, and are helped to learn effectively. Consequently they make good progress.
- Pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium are helped to catch up with other pupils. In 2012, such pupils in Year 6 reached standards which were in line with other pupils in their class in reading and writing, and are about a year ahead of similar pupils nationally. Their standards in mathematics were not quite as strong, being about nine months behind the other pupils in their class. Eligible pupils currently in the school have caught up more ground in mathematics and are close to other pupils. Compared to similar pupils elsewhere, their average points scores in reading, writing and mathematics are above average.

The quality of teaching is good

- Almost all teaching is consistently good because teachers are very dedicated and they use the information they have about how well pupils are doing to plan work which is just hard enough

for them. However, there is not yet enough teaching which is outstanding.

- Occasionally more able pupils could do work which is even more challenging, particularly in their writing. Strategies to improve this are beginning to have an impact for older pupils. For example, a group of Year 6 pupils worked at a high level on some particularly challenging texts, comparing the organisation and structure and the impact this has on the reader.
- There has been an emphasis on making sure that teachers' marking of pupils' work is effective in helping pupils to know what they need to improve. However, this good practice is not yet fully embedded and pupils do not get enough opportunities to think about the comments made by the teacher and to be able to respond to them.
- There are good systems to set targets for reading, writing and mathematics, and these are applied across different subjects. Pupils think carefully about how well they have done their work but this does not always focus on the specific targets they have been set. In the best lessons, pupils help to decide what they should be learning next and the targets they are working towards but this is not consistently the case.
- Teachers ask probing questions of the pupils during lessons, to check how well they have understood their work. They use this to adapt accordingly their explanations or the tasks that pupils are doing.
- Teachers make sure that they choose engaging topics around which to plan their lessons. For example, Years 4 and 5 pupils greatly enjoyed working out a budget for making a movie. This gave them lots of opportunities to develop a wide range of mathematical skills, within a realistic scenario. Pupils were excited about continuing this work at home, typical evidence that homework is valued.
- Teaching assistants are well informed about the particular needs of any pupils who require support and they provide this sensitively, so that pupils do as much for themselves as possible. Pupils with complex needs are particularly well supported so that they participate fully in the wider life of the school.
- A few parents raised concerns about the number of times some classes have teachers from supply agencies, when their regular teachers are away or have other duties. The school is aware of these concerns and is working to minimise the impact of this practice on the pupils' learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils like their school and feel that the teachers make sure they have interesting work to do. Older pupils say that the improvements in the buildings and resources over the past couple of years have helped to make the school an even better place in which to learn.
- Pupils of all ages show good attitudes about their learning and readily complete the tasks they are given. They frequently encourage one another and are happy to share their ideas.
- During lessons and around the school, pupils behave very well. They get along with one another happily, and respect and appreciate the wide range of different background represented. Pupils understand what the school expects of them, and those pupils who need occasional reminders respond quickly.
- Pupils feel very safe at school, and know what they can do to help keep themselves safe. They say that bullying is rare, and that any incidents, where pupils fall out or teasing becomes unpleasant, are dealt with quickly. Pupils are clear that discrimination or racism are not tolerated at the school. Pupils feel that they would be happy to talk to an adult in the school if they are worried.
- The attendance of most pupils is average. However, there are a few families whose children are too often away from school and this means that the attendance of pupils is below average overall. The school uses all the means available to support and challenge these families to help them realise the importance of attendance towards the learning and future success of their children.
- Parents and pupils were positive about the behaviour and safety in the school. Many parents commented how the school has become a much more welcoming environment over the past few

years.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and governors have made sure that they know how well the school is doing. The systems to record and analyse the progress of pupils help them to accurately identify the key strengths of the school and issues that need to be tackled. This has meant teaching has improved since the last inspection, and that standards have risen.
- Following changes in staffing over the past year, the headteacher has taken much of the responsibility for making sure teachers know how effective their teaching is, and for analysing the data about pupils' performance.
- Other leaders are developing their skills and confidence in identifying what needs to improve, including some aspects of teaching in their areas. For example, leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage provides exemplary practice and oversees the planning in Key Stage 1. However, other leaders have not always been able to collect, analyse and discuss the evidence for the progress pupils have made.
- Leaders are aware that although teaching is typically good, the very best ideas about how to teach are not always shared well enough.
- Teachers continue to review the topics around which they plan their lessons and these increasingly reflect the interests and ideas of the pupils. The headteacher and governors make sure that all groups of pupils are supported to achieve to the best of their ability. The way the school involves pupils from all backgrounds demonstrates the school's commitment to ensuring equal opportunities and preventing discrimination.
- Parents expressed quite differing views about the leadership and management of the school. While most parents feel that changes have been very positive, not all agree. A few parents expressed concerns about communication with parents, and how well the school is led and managed. The inspector found that leaders have an accurate view of the performance of the school and continue to look for ways to improve communication with parents.
- The local authority has, in the past, provided the school with support to make sure that the priorities for improvement are the right ones. However, this support has diminished as the school's capacity for maintaining its own improvement has grown. The local authority now provides only 'light touch' support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors have supported the headteacher well in bringing about improvements to the school. Together they make sure that all the statutory requirements are met, to keep pupils safe and that any adults working with the pupils are appropriate to do so. Governors regularly undertake training that helps them to understand performance data and other factors that show them how well the school is doing in comparison to other schools. They visit the school increasingly frequently to keep up to date with developments and check the evidence the headteacher provides them with, including that relating to the quality of teaching. The headteacher and governors make sure that they carefully consider how the quality of teachers' performance is reflected in their pay, and that the finances of the school are managed to make the best use of resources. In particular, governors keep a close check on how the pupil premium is used, and how effectively it is spent to help the eligible pupils to perform as well as they can.

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	114568
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	405524

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	126
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Kennedy
Headteacher	Debra Turner
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 February 2011
Telephone number	01273 473017
Fax number	01273 486559
Email address	office@st-pancras.e-sussex.sch.uk

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