

# St Paul's Catholic Junior School

Spring Grove, West Derby, Liverpool, Merseyside, L12 8SJ

**Inspection dates** 21–22 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The most able, in particular, do not make enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- As they move through the school, pupils do not get enough opportunities to apply and develop their basic skills.
- Teaching requires improvement. Teachers' planning does not always meet the different needs of pupils, particularly the most able.
- Some teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in different subjects.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to apply their number knowledge, skills and understanding in order to solve challenging mathematical problems.
- Teachers' checks on pupils' handwriting are often not good enough.
- The checks made on the pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation are not always effective.
- Often, teachers do not make it clear what pupils have to do next to improve their work, or give them the time to complete this.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' behaviour is a notable strength of the school. There are clear strategies and procedures in place that everyone understands.
- Safeguarding arrangements are robust with rigorous systems in place. This means that pupils feel safe.
- The headteacher has galvanised the whole school community to raise achievement.
- The senior leaders have made a measurable difference to the school since their appointment, especially with recent initiatives to boost progress in literacy and mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 26 lessons, of which three were joint observations with the headteacher or the deputy headteachers. In addition, the inspection team made a number of brief visits to lessons and heard pupils read in Year 3.
- The inspection team observed the school's work, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing and its development plan, documents relating to behaviour and safety, minutes of meetings of the governing body, planning and monitoring files, school improvement reports and attendance records..
- Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, parents, staff, three representatives from the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- There were 22 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also took account of the responses to the parents' questionnaire conducted by the school last year.

## Inspection team

Jean Tarry, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ben Cox

Additional Inspector

David Halford

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Paul's is much larger than the average-sized junior school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium is funding for pupils who are in local authority care, from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations set for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection three years ago, there have been four different headteachers leading and managing the school. A new senior leadership team is in place. The current headteacher took up his post in April 2012.

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

- Improve teaching in English and mathematics so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that all teachers:
  - regularly plan work that challenges the most able pupils in reading, writing and mathematics
  - have high expectations of pupils' handwriting, grammar, spelling and punctuation
  - plan lessons, especially in mathematics, that show precisely what pupils of different ability are expected to learn and how teachers will be able to check if this has been achieved
  - mark pupils' work clearly, indicating the next steps they need to take, and give pupils enough time to address any misconceptions.
- In order to raise attainment in English and mathematics, ensure that all groups of pupils make at least good progress over time by making sure that they:
  - are really challenged with their reading tasks to achieve their maximum potential
  - have regular opportunities to use their writing skills across the whole range of subjects
  - have plenty of opportunities to use and apply their number skills to solve challenging mathematical problems.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- The achievement of pupils requires improvement because standards are not high enough given pupils' starting points. In 2013, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in reading and writing was above the national average but not significantly so. Pupils' attainment in mathematics was broadly average. This was an improvement on the previous year and was due to recent specific teacher training, which has had a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Often, the most able pupils do not do as well as they could in English and mathematics and their achievement requires improvement. The predicted results for this year and the school's in-house tracking data indicate that higher-attaining pupils are on track to achieve their targets. However, these targets are not yet challenging enough.
- Pupils learn to be competent readers and writers and the school has systems in place to support pupils who struggle with aspects of literacy. However, some pupils do not make fast enough progress in reading or writing. In some cases, this is because reading and comprehension tasks are too easy. Inspectors also noticed that, while pupils produce some good-quality writing in English, this is not always the case in other subjects.
- Similarly, pupils are competent in number skills but are not always able to apply what they know to solve complex or challenging problems, and this stops them from pushing on faster with their learning.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium make expected progress. The attainment of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals was below average at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013. However, current data and pupils' work clearly show that attainment has improved for this group and that the achievement gap between these and other pupils has now closed. Pupils benefit from the precise allocation of this funding so that teaching assistants, books and electronic equipment are used effectively to best support their learning.
- Previously, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those pupils supported through school action, made variable progress through school. They now receive good levels of support, their achievements are closely tracked, and they are making progress at a similar rate to other groups.
- School data show that, presently, pupils are making better progress in English and mathematics from their starting points than in the recent past. The school is working to accelerate their progress in reading, writing and mathematics in order to raise standards, but there is still more to be done.
- Evidence from the school's data, from lessons and from the work in pupils' books for the current year shows that, although improving, pupils' rate of progress is not as rapid, or as consistent, as it should be. Some pupils currently make good progress but the progress of the majority, especially in Year 3, requires improvement.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement as pupils' work over time is not indicative of consistently good and better teaching in reading, writing and mathematics. During the inspection, the vast majority of the teaching that inspectors saw was good. However, there was a small proportion in the lower school that required improvement.
- Sometimes, teachers do not have a clear and accurate enough understanding of what pupils already know and what they need to learn next to improve further, especially in mathematics. This limits their ability to plan lessons that meet their needs. Often, the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to make good or better progress in their reading, writing and mathematical problem-solving work.
- Teachers mark work regularly and consistently with very positive comments and lots of praise. However, this is not always effective; frequently, the next steps are missing and the pupils are

not exactly sure how to improve their work. Also, teachers do not always give pupils time to correct misconceptions.

- Teachers do not always challenge pupils enough to achieve more in lessons with their handwriting, spelling, grammar and punctuation, nor do they give pupils enough opportunities to use and develop their writing skills across other subject areas.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together well. The assistants are generally skilled at supporting pupils who find learning difficult. The deputy headteacher has led the recent performance management of support staff and appropriate training has been arranged to improve the impact of their work on pupils' learning.
- In lessons seen where pupils in Year 6 made good progress, the teachers supported pupils very well to achieve good results in writing. For example, pupils were taught how to understand and then respond to an emotional text such as the short story, 'A Long Walk', which is about a boy's special relationship with his granddad. The work set by teachers was purposeful, relevant and engaging for the pupils, who knew what they had to do to succeed in their writing task.
- Teachers track the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs well. Along with support staff, they check closely how well these pupils, both as groups and individuals, are doing and plan tasks accordingly.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons, pupils are keen to learn and most stay attentive even when work is not sufficiently challenging, although a few do show signs of losing interest. School records, parents and pupils confirm that behaviour over time is good.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents and pupils believe their school is a safe environment and governors ensure that safeguarding requirements are fully met. Pupils feel very safe in school as, they say, there are adults around to help them. They feel that adults listen to them and value their views. They particularly like the lunchtime organisers whom they describe as being calm, kind and effective. A range of strategies are in place to support pupils with any behavioural issues.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and how to deal with it. They say that racism and bullying are dealt with effectively but hardly ever happen. Behaviour in lessons is conducive to learning. The school's staggered breaks help to ensure that the playground is calm and not crowded.
- Pupils take responsibility and help to make their school a warm, happy and safe environment for everyone. The 'Achievement Badges' help pupils to reflect on the importance of high standards in social and academic achievement. Pupils say they are proud of their school uniforms and their school.
- The pupils helped to draw up the school's simple behaviour code and are regularly rewarded for good behaviour or achievements. They say the school rules are very fair and that everyone is treated with respect. One pupil said, 'We are taught to look after each other and to care for each other' and inspectors saw this happening in practice.
- The parents' questionnaires carried out by the school show that parents have confidence in the care and safety the school provides for their children. The school staff try hard to address issues as they arise, if they know about them. Through interviews, the pupils show that they have great confidence in the school and their teachers.
- Attendance is similar to the national average and shows an improving trend. The school has good systems in place to promote the importance of regular attendance and good punctuality.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The present headteacher provides very effective leadership and has high aspirations for the school. He has the full support of the deputy headteachers and senior leaders. Together, they

have started to check closely the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress.

- Currently, all staff are appraised in order to evaluate their performance. There is relevant training and this has had a positive impact on the teaching of English and mathematics across the school. However, the quality of teaching over time is still not good enough. The responses of staff show that they have confidence in the school and its leaders.
- The school now has systems for checking its performance. These identify where it can get better. The quality of planning for improvement is clear, as targets are sharply focused on raising achievement.
- The literacy and numeracy teams and the senior leaders meet regularly to review the progress of pupils. These meetings give staff a clear picture of how well each pupil is doing and help to identify those who need further support.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is a real strength of the school. While the curriculum does not yet provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply and extend their basic literacy and numeracy skills, it does, however, develop and reinforce pupils' eagerness to learn and supports the development of pupils' personal skills, such as being reflective and resilient.
- The primary school sports funding is used to increase participation in a range of different sports and this has a positive impact on pupils' health and well-being.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted across the school. Leaders are striving to boost pupils' progress to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can. The school works well with outside agencies and this helps to make a difference to pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.
- The local authority provides appropriate support for the school by, for example, helping with reviews on the importance of the quality of teaching and learning in areas such as reading and mathematics.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body challenges school leaders and holds them to account for pupils' achievement and attainment. Governors are aware of the links between pupils' progress and the outcomes of the staffing reviews. They use assessment data to compare the school's performance to that of others.
  - Governors contribute very well to managing staff by using the outcomes of performance reviews to improve teaching, leadership and management or to tackle any underperformance.
  - Statutory duties are fulfilled by the governing body and discrimination is not tolerated. There is now efficient financial management. The use of the pupil premium, for example, is now planned carefully to get best value, and its impact on the achievement of pupils known to be eligible is checked. The governors can now show that significant improvements have been made in this area.
  - Safeguarding requirements are fully met and policies and procedures are regularly reviewed.

## 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>	104661
<b>Local authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	440452

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	507
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Joyce Kavanagh
<b>Headteacher</b>	Edward Flood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 February 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 228 1159
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