

# St Agnes Catholic Primary School

Thorverton Road, Cricklewood, London, NW2 1RG

**Inspection dates** 9–10 October 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The new headteacher has forged a strong team. Along with governors, leaders and managers are raising achievement and improving teaching.
- Pupils make good progress across the school. Standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Effective measures to support new teachers have kept teaching good in a period of rapid change. The school is successful at developing its staff.
- Teaching challenges all groups of pupils well, including the most able, to make good progress.
- Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel very safe in school.
- Children achieve well in the early years and are well prepared for Year 1. There is a good emphasis on developing their language skills.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are sometimes not given time to act upon teachers' written comments in their books. Teachers do not consistently check whether pupils have made the required changes to improve their work. As a result, pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- There is not always enough emphasis on celebrating the diversity of languages and cultures represented in the school to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 24 lessons or parts of lessons, including 11 jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Members of the inspection team heard pupils read and, with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, looked closely at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, safeguarding and subject materials, evidence of the school's partnership work and information for families.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils chosen at random. Discussions were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and other staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- An inspector attended a meeting of the parents' forum and a meeting for parents about a forthcoming residential visit.
- The inspectors took account of the 73 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also spoke informally to parents in the playground.
- The inspectors considered the 14 staff questionnaires that were completed.

## Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janet Tomkins	Additional inspector
Velia Hartland	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Three quarters of pupils are from a range of minority ethnic groups, which is a large proportion. Almost half the pupils speak English as an additional language. There are 24 different languages represented in the school.
- Almost one fifth of pupils are supported by the pupil premium (additional funding which in this school supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals). This is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, at less than one tenth, is broadly average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is also average.
- Early years provision is full time in Reception and part time in the Nursery with extended hours provision.
- The headteacher joined the school in April 2014. An interim headteacher was in post for the two terms prior to this. There has been a very high turnover of teaching staff. Only one full time class teacher has been at the school for longer than two years.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment by the end of Key Stage 2.
- The school runs a breakfast club.

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

- Ensure all teachers give pupils the opportunity to act upon their written comments in their books and check they have made the required changes in order to improve their work and make faster progress.
- Give greater emphasis to celebrating the diversity of pupils' languages and backgrounds, as they prepare for life in modern Britain, for example in displays around the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher and deputy headteacher have forged a strong partnership and have set high expectations for all staff and pupils. They relentlessly drive improvement with a particular focus on strengthening teaching and raising pupils' achievement.
- Senior leaders have successfully managed a large number of new staff joining the school. Strong leadership of teaching means that newly qualified teachers are especially well supported to become consistent in their practice. Much of the strongest teaching is home grown.
- The new headteacher has made the school an attractive place in which to learn. The 'reading kingdom' in particular is a place where pupils enjoy going to read a good book. The headteacher has set out a clear vision for change underpinned by the school's deeply held values.
- The school has a strong track record of improvement since its previous inspection. Where a weakness is identified, such as reading in 2013, it is tackled promptly and vigorously.
- Teachers are given challenging targets as part of the management of their performance, and pay progression is linked securely to pupils' success in the classroom. The school ensures that all pupils are treated equally and there is no discrimination of any kind.
- Subject and other leaders are effective in their work, even though several are fairly new to their roles. They are looking outside the school for inspiration and bringing in good new ideas. For example, the mathematics leader is involved with other schools in a project to raise pupils' achievement.
- The leadership of provision for pupils with special educational needs is strong and makes sure that support is well chosen to match the needs of pupils. The impact of this work is checked closely.
- The range of subjects and topics is varied and broad. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to write across different subjects such as history and religious education. There is a strong emphasis on respecting one another and showing tolerance. Strengths in music, physical education and Spanish enrich pupils' experiences. They go on a good number of visits to places of interest and take part in a wide variety of clubs.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is used effectively on sports coaches and training for staff in dance. Sports provision as part of the school's breakfast club prepares pupils with an active start to the day. There has been greater participation by pupils in sport and staff are more confident in teaching dance.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social understanding very well. While pupils learn about people from other cultures and faiths, this is not always emphasised in displays around the school. For example, while pupils speak a total of 24 different languages between them, these are not explicitly celebrated. Nonetheless, pupils are generally well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Parents are positive about the school and their children's education. They are keen to support their children, for example through the parents' forum, where topics of mutual interest are discussed with the school.
- The local authority has provided good support for the school, including in the areas of mathematics and early years.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are effective in their support and challenge of the school. They visit regularly to check how well it is doing. Since the previous inspection they have been trained in understanding data and have a good knowledge of pupils' achievement and how this compares with that of pupils in other schools nationally. They know about the school's strengths and areas to improve and the quality of teaching. This includes an understanding of how the school rewards good teaching and tackles any underperformance. They know that the pupil premium is spent on giving additional support to disadvantaged pupils and creating opportunities for them to participate in clubs and visits. They are aware of the positive impact this is having in closing gaps in attainment. Governors are involved in managing the performance of the headteacher and know how targets are set for all staff. They are taking a long-term view of the school to ensure it continues to thrive.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are enthusiastic about learning. They have a good understanding of what makes a good learner and live out the school motto of 'perseverance'.
- Pupils get on well together. They say they are kind. Changes to the duration of the lunch hour have had a positive impact. On the rare occasions where incidents occur, pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their conduct and how it affects others.
- Pupils enjoy taking responsibility as members of the school council, play leaders and junior travel ambassadors. They raise money for a children's charity they have chosen themselves.
- Occasionally pupils are distracted in class and do not follow instructions straight away, which can slow the pace of learning.
- Attendance is above average, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel very safe and that bullying is not an issue.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying such as cyber bullying. They have very good understanding of keeping safe, for example from strangers, on the roads and when out cycling.
- Pupils have an excellent knowledge of how to keep safe on the internet. They know how to keep themselves safe and to support others. Parents who responded to Parent View very strongly agreed that their children were safe at school.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Teachers make learning interesting for pupils so that they are keen to engage. They do not accept pupils' first answers, but follow them up with searching questioning to make pupils think more deeply.
- Teaching promotes pupils' spiritual and moral awareness well. They have meaningful debates in religious education classes. Through science they consider life cycles that include death as well as birth and life.
- Music is well taught. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 all played the ukulele together to create a moment of wonder as they concentrated intensely on changing chords at the same time.
- Books show that pupils make good progress over time and overwhelmingly take a pride in their work. There are some very good examples of marking where teachers give pupils clear advice about how to improve their learning and refer to pupils' individual targets. At times, pupils are not given the opportunity to act upon their teachers' advice. Occasionally teachers do not follow up to check pupils have made the necessary changes to improve their work.
- Teachers are quick to pick up when pupils do not understand or have misconceptions. They shape lessons to meet their needs and celebrate good examples of learning. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson focusing on sensory language, the teacher drew pupils' attention to the simile one of them had written, 'as miserable as a toothless alligator'.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They are consistent in the way they teach reading and writing and adjust teaching to suit the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Teaching assistants are skilful in supporting groups and individuals and make a valuable contribution to their learning. The many pupils who speak English as an additional language benefit from having plenty of opportunities to share their ideas.

**The achievement of pupils is good**

- Children join the Nursery with skill levels below those typically found, two thirds of these children speaking very little English. They make good progress in the early years because staff know them very well. They have plenty of opportunities to solve problems and develop their early literacy skills.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1. Standards have been rising over time. In 2014 the attainment of Year 2 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics was a little above average.

- Pupils continue to achieve well in Key Stage 2. They make good progress over time. Standards by the end of Year 6 in 2014 were above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Across the school, almost all pupils make expected progress and the proportions exceeding expected progress compare favourably with national expectations. Most pupils reach levels of attainment expected for their age and many do even better.
- In 2014 disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium were half a term behind the others in the school in reading and writing and there was no gap in their attainment for the second year in a row in mathematics. The gaps for reading and writing closed considerably compared with the situation in 2013. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally is less than a term in reading and writing. There is no gap in mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their different starting points and their progress compares favourably with that of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well because the school does much to develop their language skills. Staff adapt learning to take into account these pupils' needs, and this enables them to become proficient in English quickly.
- The education provided by the school meets the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs well. The specific programmes to support their learning help them to catch up with their peers. Good training for teaching assistants equips them well to provide effective support. This enables this group of pupils to make good progress.
- The most able pupils are challenged well to reach the higher levels of attainment. Teachers identify them in planning and cater well for their needs. They have high expectations of them and this enables them to achieve well like their peers.
- In 2013, progress and attainment in reading were not quite so strong as in writing and mathematics. Leaders took swift actions to remedy this, investing in new books and creating new reading areas. They renovated the library and raised parents' awareness of their children's reading. Reading was taught more systematically. The impact of these measures was that standards in reading rose to above average by the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in 2014. Pupils read fluently with expression and understanding, almost all reading at home on a daily basis. Most pupils met the required standard in the Year 1 phonics check (the sounds that letters make) and use a range of approaches when tackling unknown words.
- Pupils achieve well in writing because they have plenty of opportunity to write at length across different subjects. For example, in religious education, pupils wrote a letter to St Francis of Assisi. A whole-school approach to sentence structure has had a positive impact.
- In mathematics, pupils apply their knowledge and understanding through solving real-life problems. They have a good appreciation of number and learn to calculate in a systematic way as they move from class to class.

### The early years provision

is good

- Children at the early stages of learning English acquire the language quickly. They are encouraged to talk about their learning and immerse themselves in a wide range of stimulating activities.
- Good teaching ensures that children have many opportunities to explore and solve problems. A group of children enjoyed discovering how water flows when they were sending fish down a chute. They puzzled over noughts and crosses games. They used their imaginations when following a trail to find a giant.
- Children settle quickly into the safe environment of the Nursery and Reception classes. They learn to share and behave well. They are soon sustaining their concentration on purposeful activities across all areas of learning both indoors and out. Nursery children enjoyed stamping in puddles in wellington boots.
- The leadership and management of the early years are good and enable children to achieve well. Staff know the children well and work together effectively as a team. They carefully assess how children are doing using an electronic system to record children's achievements. They share this with parents, who value the partnership with staff in their children's learning.

## 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>	101332
<b>Local authority</b>	Barnet
<b>Inspection number</b>	448215

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<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>	356
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gill Abbot
<b>Headteacher</b>	Susan O'Reilly
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12–13 May 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8452 4565
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