

St Pancras Catholic Primary School, Ipswich

Stratford Road, Ipswich, IP1 6EF

Inspection dates

5–6 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Leaders and governors, through their effective leadership, have ensured significant improvement in teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their different starting points. By the end of Year 6, pupils' levels of attainment are in line with those found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is good, with some that is outstanding. Teachers use questioning effectively to improve pupils' learning.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as, and often better than, other pupils because of skilful support from teachers and teaching assistants.
- The school successfully enhances pupils' learning experiences through a range of subjects and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively.
- The good provision in the Reception class ensures that children make good progress.
- Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes to learning contribute considerably to their achievement. Pupils say they feel safe at school, and the overwhelming majority of parents agree.
- Leaders and governors ensure that a strong Catholic ethos is reflected in all aspects of the school's work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While good, pupils' progress in mathematics is not as rapid as it is in reading and writing.
- The most able pupils are not stretched sufficiently to ensure that they achieve as well as they can.
- Presentation and handwriting skills are not well-developed in Key Stage 1.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 12 lessons, three of which were joint lesson observations with the headteacher. In addition, they made a number of other short visits to lessons and observed small groups of pupils taught by teachers and teaching assistants. The inspectors also listened to pupils in Years 2 and 6 read to them.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of 27 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View), 23 parents' comments and the 16 responses to the staff questionnaire. They also talked to parents as they collected their children into school.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' books and at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current attainment and progress, the school's evaluation of its performance, school improvement planning, documentation relating to teachers' performance over time and records relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Tusha Chakraborti, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Webster

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. A few are from minority ethnic groups but none are at an early stage of English language acquisition.
- Approximately one in five pupils is eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. This is average.
- More than one tenth of pupils are disabled or have special educational needs and are supported through school action which is above average. The same proportion is supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, which is also above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Numbers of pupils joining or leaving the school part way through the taught year have increased in recent years and several pupils join the school in Key Stage 2.
- The school is a member of the local Catholic schools community and works closely with and the Diocese of East Anglia.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching to accelerate pupils' progress and raise achievement, especially in mathematics, by:
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to develop skills for solving problems in mathematics
 - making sure that all tasks set in lessons take into account what pupils can already do and are sufficiently demanding for all pupils, especially the most able
 - improving pupils' presentation and handwriting skills in Key Stage 1.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders, with the support of the governing body and staff, have taken effective action to improve the school. They have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. This has resulted in the improved quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Staff and parents responding to inspection questionnaires are very positive about the work of the school.
 - The quality of teaching is monitored effectively, as senior and subject leaders observe lessons regularly to identify areas for improvement. Procedures for staff performance are rigorous and applied consistently. All teachers are responsible for their pupils' performance. Leaders set challenging targets for individual teachers which are reviewed regularly. This has resulted in accelerated progress for most pupils since the previous inspection. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled or have special educational needs.
 - Subject leaders carry their roles and responsibilities effectively. They keep a careful check on pupils' achievement across the school.
 - The new curriculum is being taught well. There is a strong focus on the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Effective links between literacy, history and science ensure that pupils are involved in their learning effectively. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues are taught well through the curriculum. Assemblies, such as remembrance assembly, and religious studies support pupils to reflect on the connections between spirituality and action in their own lives. There is a strong focus on music. Pupils sing hymns and songs in languages from other countries, such as from Nigeria. Last year, the school choir sang in schools' prom at the Royal Albert Hall, and also at Downing Street during the launch of a new music programme. These opportunities prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
 - The primary physical education and sport premium is used to provide a specialist coach to deliver high quality physical education and to train staff to raise their expertise in sports. This is helping pupils to learn new skills and increase their understanding of living a healthy life. Pupil participation rate is now very high and pupils enjoy a range of inter-school competitions.
 - The school has a strong focus on promoting equal opportunities throughout the school. This is reflected in the comments of pupils during discussion; one commented, 'I think my school is the best because teachers care about you and they treat everybody equally regardless of where they come from'. It fosters relations well and makes sure that there is no discrimination.
 - The pupil premium funding is used very effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well. They are supported very well in classrooms as well as in small groups.
 - The local authority has provided very effective support for the school and has helped the school to bring about improvement. Leaders and members of the governing body have worked very well with the local authority to achieve this.
 - The procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust and meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body is well led and organised. It both challenges and supports leaders and staff well. Governors have attended training on analysing data and know how the school compares with schools nationally. They visit the school regularly to deepen their knowledge and understanding of its current performance. Governors monitor the school's finances carefully, including the use of the pupil premium to improve disadvantaged pupils' achievement. They understand the link between teachers' performance and salary progression and ensure that teachers are rewarded if they are able to raise achievement. They know what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are welcoming to visitors and proud of their school. Relationships between pupils themselves and with adults are respectful and very positive. Consequently, the school is a calm and harmonious place where pupils grow up as confident learners.
- Pupils are keen to learn, attentive and enjoy their work. They say lessons are hardly ever disrupted by poor behaviour. They are keen to take on responsibilities such as being members of the school council and raising funds to help those less fortunate than themselves.
- Attendance has risen steadily and is now above national average. This is because the school worked effectively with families to reduce the incidence of persistent absence.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because occasionally, when the pace or challenge of a lesson slows, a few pupils begin to lose their focus on learning.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school. They have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe, because safety in a range of situations, including e-safety, is taught well by the school.
- Pupils are well aware of the different forms of bullying. They are confident that any poor behaviour, including bullying, which is rare, will be dealt with quickly and appropriately by adults. They have a clear understanding of the dangers of the misuse of the internet and social networking sites, and they know what to do if they should encounter it. Parents are highly appreciative of the high quality of care and attention shown to their children.

The quality of teaching is good

- The school's strong focus on improving the quality of teaching has resulted in teaching that is now good, with some examples of that are outstanding. Consequently, pupils are making good progress and standards have risen. Strong and supportive relationships between all adults and pupils help to promote learning in all classrooms.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan work carefully and make pupils' learning interesting and engaging. An effective link with pupils' learning in other subjects gives pupils opportunities to build on their prior learning. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils discussed how to structure a report, based on a text that enabled them to draw very successfully from their understanding of scientific facts. Here, skilful questioning extended pupils' thinking skills leading to a stimulating discussion which ensured high quality engagement of pupils in their learning.
- Pupils read a range of stories and information texts which enhance their understanding of characters and of different styles of text. Standards in reading have risen sharply over the past year.
- The school's effective links with external agencies ensure that support for pupils with additional social or emotional needs is very effective. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely to support these pupils effectively and ensure that they make good progress.
- Teachers provide a variety of different work for different groups of pupils but they do not always make effective use of the assessment information to ensure that work is hard enough to stretch all groups of pupils, especially the most able. In mathematics in particular, most-able pupils are not given challenging enough problems to consolidate and extend their mathematical understanding. Sometimes, assessment is not used effectively to evaluate the progress of different groups of pupils during lessons so that teachers

move pupils on to the next task quickly enough.

- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and pupils receive clear guidance on what they need to learn next. Pupils are given time to act upon teachers' advice.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in Reception with skills that are well below those typical for their age, especially in communication and language development. They make rapid progress during their time in Reception.
- Standards of attainment by the end of Year 6 and the rate of progress across the school have improved rapidly since the previous inspection a year ago. Lesson observations and work in pupils' books show that most pupils are making good progress from their different starting points.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are developing basic skills in literacy and numeracy well. They quickly learn to use their phonics knowledge of letters and sounds to tackle new words. The proportion of pupils reaching expected standards in the phonics screening check in 2014 was above average. Attainment at the end of Year 2 declined slightly in 2014 as a result of staffing difficulty. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in Year 1 and 2 are now making good progress overall. However, their handwriting and presentation skills are untidy.
- The most able pupils, although making good progress in all areas, are not consistently challenged sufficiently to perform as well as they can. However, many of them develop a clear understanding of how to write effectively for different purposes and of the application of the four operations of mathematics for calculations.
- Progress in mathematics, while good, is not as rapid as that in reading and writing. This is because pupils are not always supported sufficiently to extend their problem-solving skills.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported by skilled teaching assistants and through effective intervention programmes. As a result these pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils, who are supported by the pupil premium, achieve standards in line with their peers and, often, better. This is due to the very effective support they receive within the class. In 2014, the gaps between these pupils' attainment and others' at the end of Year 6 narrowed considerably. They were nearly a term behind in reading but half a term above in writing and mathematics and approximately two terms above in grammar, punctuation and spelling. The gaps between the attainment of these pupils and other pupils nationally have also narrowed. In mathematics these pupils were one and half terms behind, and a term behind similar pupils in grammar, punctuation and spelling. The gaps in reading and writing have almost closed.

The early years provision is good

- Children make good progress from starting points that are below typical skills and abilities. As a result, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception is broadly in line with the national average.
- Teaching is good. Staff are particularly successful in creating a welcoming and stimulating environment where children develop rapidly in all aspects of personal and social development. An attractive learning environment with vibrant displays and a good range of resources interest children and stimulate their imagination. Staff provide a range of engaging activities that capture children's imagination and move their learning on quickly. As a result, children quickly engage in a range of indoor and outdoor activities that encourage them to learn through activities of their own choice as well as those initiated by adults.

Their behaviour is managed well.

- Regular teaching of phonics supports children well in developing their literacy skills. They use a range of strategies to explore new words, carefully identifying letters and the sounds they make. Children are eager to explain what they do. Some of them are keen to read to adults, narrating their own story from picture books of their own choice. Disabled children and those who have special educational needs are very well integrated and benefit from good support from skilled teaching assistants.

- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Staff work very well with parents to ensure that there are really good levels of communication and the children get off to a good start. Assessment of children's progress is rigorous and the information gained is used effectively for planning. The leader has been successful in promoting effective teamwork and has taken steps to strengthen the assessment system further to ensure that children make even greater progress. Staff ensure that children's health, safety and well-being are always of utmost importance. They successfully provide children with an enjoyable, safe and secure learning environment.

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	124785
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	452877

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	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Mayston
Headteacher	Stephen Barker
Date of previous school inspection	5 June 2013
Telephone number	01473 742074
Fax number	01473 742074
Email address	Ad.st.pancras.p@talk21.com

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