

# St Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Primary School

Pennywell Road, Bristol, BS5 0TJ

## Inspection dates

16–17 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	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.

- Pupils achieve well. They make good progress from low starting points to reach the national average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Governors, senior leaders and managers are highly ambitious for the school. Recent actions have ensured that achievement is good, and is improving.
- Teaching and learning in the Reception class are good so that children benefit from a strong start to their development.
- The academy has worked remarkably well with parents to improve pupils' attendance. Pupils' attendance is now at least in line with the national average.
- The academy promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. There is a strong sense of community of which pupils, parents and staff are proud and happy to be a part.
- The curriculum is rich and diverse, making a significant contribution towards developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Adults' expectations of pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are high and this results in strong levels of trust and respect between pupils and towards adults.
- Pupils feel very safe. They are usually eager to learn, and are very proud of their school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The work set is not always hard enough, especially for the most able pupils, and the use of pupil targets in English and mathematics is not consistent across the academy.
- Pupils do not always have enough time to complete tasks or to respond to their teacher's comments to help improve their work.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 12 teachers. Five of these lessons were joint observations with the headteacher and two lessons were observed with the deputy headteacher. Inspectors also observed a school assembly.
- Conversations were held with the headteacher, other staff with leadership responsibilities, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and spoke to pupils about their work and other aspects of the school. Inspectors also heard pupils read.
- A variety of school documentation was examined, including records of current pupils' progress, improvement plans, behaviour, accident and attendance logs, minutes of governors' meetings, and records relating to safeguarding and to the management of staff performance. Inspectors also analysed the school's records of the quality of teaching and information displayed on the school website.
- The 26 responses to the questionnaire on the Parent View website were considered as well as 26 questionnaires returned by staff. Inspectors also spoke to parents before the start of school and took account of pupils' behaviour and social interaction during playtimes and in the dining hall.

## Inspection team

Matthew Cottrell, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Linda Rowley

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Nicholas of Tolentine converted to become an academy in December 2012. When its predecessor school, also known as St Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The academy is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much higher than average, as is the proportion of those who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above average (pupil premium funding is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after).
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average.
- The academy has a governing body.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

- Further improve the quality of teaching so that standards of attainment and the rates of progress pupils make in their learning are consistently outstanding by:
  - providing more challenging work for pupils, especially for the most able
  - ensuring that pupils are given enough time to complete their work and to respond to the teacher's marking
  - making consistent use of targets in English and mathematics so that pupils are clear as to how they can improve their work.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides determined and focused leadership that is increasingly involving all staff in school improvement work. She is supported by an effective team, including the governors, who are ambitious to further raise standards.
- Senior leaders know the academy well and there is a rigorous focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Recent improvements are beginning to ensure that more pupils make better progress and reach higher levels of attainment.
- Leaders manage teachers' performance well. A highly effective system identifies teachers' training needs and relevant training is then provided. The professional development of staff is given a high priority and is linked explicitly to pupils' progress.
- Leaders provide clear guidance to teachers, especially those at the very earliest stages of their careers. Training for new teachers ensures that they quickly adapt to the school's high expectations.
- Middle leaders are well organised and check standards in subjects systematically. They offer class teachers well-judged advice and practical support to improve their teaching. However, middle leaders have not checked to see if all pupils are given learning targets. As a result, pupils in some classes are given targets to help them improve their learning in English and mathematics and others are not.
- The school has a broad and diverse curriculum that effectively meets pupils' needs and prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Learning is enriched by a wide-ranging and interesting variety of subjects and activities, such as a steel pan class. The school provides a range of exciting learning opportunities for pupils. For example, every child learns to play an instrument for three years to enhance the richness of their curriculum experience. There are opportunities for pupils to take part in day trips relating to their lessons and topics as well as whole-school trips such as a visit to the ballet.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional. Assemblies are times for all to reflect on the academy's values. Pupils are genuinely pleased for each other when academic or sporting achievements are celebrated. A carefully thought-out programme ensures that pupils develop a strong understanding of beliefs and lifestyles around the world. Themed weeks complement this. For example, a recent themed week entitled 'Black History' covered many aspects of culture, history and society both in Britain and abroad.
- The school receives light-touch support from the local authority and the Diocese of Clifton which has supported the school in raising standards
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are very well informed and know the academy extremely well. The governing body actively contributes to the academy's monitoring and evaluation programme through regular visits and robust questioning. Governors provide both support and challenge for the headteacher and ensure that she is held to account for pupil progress. For example, they ensure that there is a clear link between the quality of teaching and pupils' progress and the way in which teachers move along the pay scales. Governors carefully check the use of the pupil premium funding so that it enables eligible pupils to achieve at least as well as their peers. Governors are similarly diligent in ensuring that the additional sports funding is well used. The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff set high standards to which pupils respond. Pupils show respect and friendliness to adults, visitors and their classmates. This ensures a happy, welcoming and harmonious school that is committed to succeed, and has a very positive effect on the rate at which pupils learn.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good across the academy. However, very occasionally a few pupils lose concentration, when they are not given enough time to complete a task or when they find work too easy.
- Attendance has improved because the academy has worked hard with pupils and their families to help them understand how important it is to come to school regularly. The introduction of a breakfast club, sponsored by a local business, has made a significant contribution toward increasing attendance and improving punctuality.

- Pupils with particular behavioural needs are helped to learn to manage their behaviour through a robust system of rewards and sanctions. This has led to a significant reduction in the number of exclusions in recent years.

### Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Procedures for identifying and reporting any safeguarding issues are very thorough. The academy liaises well with other agencies in order to provide the best possible outcomes for pupils most at risk of falling behind.
- Pupils know about keeping themselves safe. They are very clear about what constitutes bullying and the various forms in which it can take place. They assert that this occurs very rarely in school and explain that this is because lessons and assemblies teach them to be kind and respectful of different lifestyles, faiths and ethnic groups.
- The views of all pupils are valued and nurtured, so all feel special. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is consistently good. Discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of the work in their books confirms that teaching is good.
- Teachers use a wide range of strategies to improve pupils' progress. For example, the teaching of reading and writing is based on giving pupils a sound, basic grasp of phonics (sounds that letters make). The school is especially effective in supporting pupils learning English as an additional language. These pupils make particularly good progress.
- Observations in lessons and work in pupils' books, show that most of the work undertaken by pupils successfully matches their ability and moves their learning forward. On occasions, the work given to pupils is not challenging enough, especially for the most-able pupils, and this limits their progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to ensure that pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, have the support and challenge that they need to make good progress. Pupils appreciate this support and report that they enjoy learning and that teachers make lessons fun. Parents say that their children are taught very well.
- Teachers' marking shows pupils where they have been successful and shows them what they need to do next to improve their work. Sometimes pupils are not always given time to act on the guidance they are given and so do not make as much progress as they could.

### The achievement of pupils is good

- By the end of Year 6, pupils reach expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics, which represents good progress from their low starting points. Standards are rising across the academy.
- The academy's results in the Year 1 phonics check have been higher than the national average and standards continue to rise. The academy is especially effective in the way in which it teaches pupils to read and as a result standards in reading and writing are also improving.
- Attainment in mathematics is not yet as high as it is in reading or writing, but it is rising. The academy has introduced a new way of teaching mathematics that ensures that basic skills are reinforced. For example, pupils in Year 2 were challenged to solve 'real-life' money problems using a range of materials, and this helped them to gain a more secure understanding of number. Pupils' work shows that actions taken to improve standards in mathematics have been successful.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium do well across the academy. Leaders use the funding effectively to close gaps in the pupils' knowledge and to help them catch up to where they need to be. These pupils make strong progress. By the end of Year 6, there is no difference between their attainment and that of their peers in school and pupils nationally.
- The achievement of the most-able pupils is improving. In 2014 a higher proportion of pupils in Year 6 achieved the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics through effective targeted support. These pupils make at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make better progress than their peers because there

is a strong focus on developing vocabulary and on the correct use of grammar. Teachers plan carefully to meet the needs of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English.

- Pupils from different ethnic groups achieve equally well because the school is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and is highly successful at tackling discrimination.

### The early years provision

is good

- Children begin their time at school with skills that are well below those typical for their age. By the time they leave Reception class they have acquired skills and abilities that are broadly in line with those expected for their age.
- Teaching is good and standards are rising in the early years. This is because there are supportive relationships between adults and children that help develop confidence and a positive attitude to learning. The school has taken recent action to reduce class sizes in order to improve the teacher-pupil ratio. However, it is too early to evaluate whether this strategy is contributing to improved pupil standards.
- The classroom and outdoor area are organised so that there is an effective balance of activities that help children to explore for themselves and practise the skills they learn as they play. Adults rigorously track the progress children make and use this information to plan future activities that will build on children's knowledge and skills. This is ensuring that the children are ready to start in Year 1.
- Children's behaviour is good in the Reception class because staff help them to develop the skills to work and play well together and provide stimulating and relevant activities that sustain their interest.
- All groups of pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported. Any specific needs are quickly identified and individual or group activities make sure that the needs are met. Links between home and school are excellent and carry on throughout a child's time at the school.
- The leadership and management of Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and have well-thought-through plans for improvement.

## 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>	139032
<b>Local authority</b>	Bristol
<b>Inspection number</b>	449206

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>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	195
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ann Hibbert
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jacqueline McCarthy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	0117 3772260
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