

St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Adams Hill, Bartley Green, Birmingham, B32 3QD

Inspection dates 27–28 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The quality of teaching, although improving recently, has not been good enough to secure good achievement by the time pupils leave the school.
- Pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 has not been consistently good over the last three years. In 2014, too few pupils made or exceeded nationally expected progress in mathematics and reading.
- The work teachers set does not always challenge pupils to do well, especially in mathematics. They do not get enough opportunity to use their mathematical skills to solve problems.
- Teachers' marking does not give pupils help to improve their work.
- Some senior leaders are relatively new to their posts and they have had limited impact on improving teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Information regarding pupils' progress gathered by the school has not been used well by teachers to plan and set work at the right level of difficulty for the pupils.
- Governors have not done enough to ensure that the previously good standards of teaching and achievement have been maintained.

The school has the following strengths

- Better teaching means that the progress of pupils in the current academic year has improved.
- Pupils make good progress throughout the school in developing their skills in writing and phonics (the sounds that letters make). Younger pupils develop early reading skills at a good rate.
- Children in the early years and in Key Stage 1 are taught well and make good progress.
- Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding are good.
- Pupils behave well together in lessons and around the school. They feel safe and happy, enjoy working with their teachers, and their attendance has improved.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They observed 10 lessons, of which three were joint observations with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors observed the pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and on the playground. The work that pupils are doing in their books was also scrutinised.
- Discussions were held with pupils and members of staff, including senior leaders, subject leaders and the leader responsible for special educational needs. Inspectors also met with the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including those relating to its use of the primary sport and pupil premium funding. Arrangements for keeping pupils safe across the school were also reviewed.
- The views of parents were taken into account by looking at responses to the most recent school questionnaire and the 22 responses to the online Parent View survey. The inspector also met parents at the end of the school day.
- Staff views were considered by analysing the 18 questionnaires completed by staff and through discussions held with staff during the inspection.

Inspection team

Ian Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Cassandra Williams

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school. Pupils attend the Reception class on a full-time basis.
- About two thirds of the pupils are White British. The other pupils come from a wide range of ethnic groups.
- Approximately one pupil in three is disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority). This is above the national average.
- At 38%, the proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is well 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 by the end of Year 6.
- There have been a number of staff changes this year. The deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher posts are temporary, and three new teachers were appointed in September 2014. The special educational needs leader started this year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - the work set in lessons is challenging and takes full account of pupils' abilities
 - marking gives pupils clear and helpful information on how to improve their work.
- Raise achievement in mathematics and reading by ensuring that:
 - pupils acquire a range of practical mathematical skills and regular opportunities to apply them
 - the most-able pupils are fully challenged in mathematics
 - pupils get better help with their reading, especially in Key Stage 2.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, by ensuring that:
 - checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are carried out systematically and prompt action is taken when weaknesses in performance are identified
 - governors gain a greater understanding of performance data in order to challenge leaders rigorously to improve teaching and achievement.

An external review of governance, including the use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- While leaders have ensured that pupils make good progress in writing, progress in mathematics has been too slow. As a result, achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 has not been good enough in this subject.
- Leaders have not used information from the monitoring of teaching and learning effectively to improve teaching, particularly in mathematics. Consequently, the leadership team has been slow in tackling some underachievement in the past. A more rigorous process of monitoring teaching and learning was introduced this year. This, together with replanning of the mathematics curriculum, is helping to accelerate rates of progress across the school.
- There have been significant changes in teaching staff in recent years, which have inevitably caused some unsettlement. However, the current teaching staff are beginning to have a better impact on progress.
- Senior, subject and other leaders vary in their effectiveness. Some are new in post and have not yet evaluated the impact of their work. For example, the special educational needs leader has a good overview of the specific needs of pupils and how they are supported. Support for writing has been effective and pupils achieve well, but progress in reading and mathematics is too variable.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding to provide additional staffing and learning resources for disadvantaged pupils. However, funding was not used well enough last year to provide challenge and support, and the gap between these pupils and their peers widened in 2014.
- Leaders have been successful at improving behaviour and the school is a welcoming and friendly place, which pupils and their parents appreciate. However, leaders have not been able to maintain the good standard of teaching reported at the previous inspection.
- Sports funding is used effectively by the school, with a good range of additional activities offered to pupils. Sports coaches are employed to support staff in becoming better skilled at teaching a wide array of activities.
- Leaders have strengthened their procedures for managing staff performance this year. They are now quicker to identify and tackle underperformance. Staff targets are now linked more closely to the standards expected of teachers. This is beginning to have a positive impact on improving teaching.
- Leaders make sure that arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding and staff recruitment meet statutory requirements. Records of child protection concerns and safeguarding incidents are appropriately maintained. Senior leaders and staff have a good awareness of child protection procedures, and maintain vigilance over pupils' safety and well-being.
- The school curriculum is good and is having a positive impact on preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. Understanding of differences between people underpins both the curriculum and the pastoral care within the school. Pupils have a good understanding of other faiths and cultures, and they respect others whose background or religion is different from their own. The many enrichment activities promote tolerance and respect, and contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents support the school and rate its work highly.
- The local authority has provided light touch support for the school since the previous inspection. The local authority is aware of the inconsistent achievement since the previous inspection but has not prioritised the school for additional support until recently.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance requires improvement. Governors do not have a secure understanding of data and so rely too heavily on what senior leaders tell them about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Their expectations of what the school could achieve are therefore too cautious. However, some aspects of governance have been effective. For example, governors have a clear understanding of performance management procedures; they have challenged and supported the headteacher through difficult but necessary decisions about the staffing structure in the school. They also ensure that the school provides an attractive and purposeful learning environment, greatly appreciated by staff and pupils. The budget is well managed. Governors know how the pupil premium is being used to support disadvantaged pupils but they have not ensured that leaders evaluate the impact of the pupil premium well enough and they have not ensured equality of opportunity for disadvantaged pupils.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The relationships between the pupils and their teachers are a strength of the school. Pupils are keen to learn and give of their best. Pupils' behaviour in the classroom is almost always positive. Only rarely do some pupils lose concentration.
- Pupils closely follow the school's behaviour code. They understand established classroom routines and respond promptly when teachers ask for their attention, so that time is not wasted.
- Attendance has improved and is now average. The school has used effective measures, working closely with parents and carers, to reduce rates of absence.
- The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to reflect on a broad range of issues in assemblies and lessons, and they do so thoughtfully.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The headteacher and governors ensure that the school premises are safe. Almost every parent who responded to the Parent View questionnaire considers that their children are safe and happy at school.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know how to report any concerns. They say there is little bullying and, if there are any problems, they are sorted out quickly and fairly.
- Child protection procedures are effectively managed and are reviewed regularly by the school's leaders.
- Teaching in different subjects helps pupils to learn how to stay safe in a wide range of situations. Pupils have a good understanding of e-safety, including how to avoid unsafe websites.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching has not been consistently good enough to ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress. Although writing has been taught effectively throughout the school, pupils have not reached the highest levels of which they are capable in mathematics and reading because teaching has not been good enough.
- In mathematics, pupils have typically not had enough opportunities to apply new skills in problem solving or investigative work. Teachers have not always had high enough expectations for what the most-able pupils could achieve. A new approach to mathematics teaching is helping to resolve the weaknesses of the past, but some older pupils are still not achieving the standards of which they are capable.
- Teachers' marking is not effective enough to raise achievement. A new marking policy was introduced this year with the aim of improving the quality of support provided to pupils but it is inconsistently applied. In

mathematics, comments often refer to effort or presentation, and do not provide sufficient guidance to pupils on how pupils they can improve their work.

- Overall, the quality of teaching has improved this year. However, in some lessons, teachers make insufficient use of the information they have about what pupils already know and can do when they plan and set the tasks pupils are expected to undertake. This means that the tasks do not challenge and stretch pupils to learn as well as they could. As a result, too few pupils attain higher levels in mathematics.
- Teaching of early reading skills is good, and pupils' attainment is above average in the phonics screening check in Year 1. Pupils read fluently, and most enjoy reading and make good use of the school library. However, older pupils do not get enough support to develop reading comprehension skills, and so their rate of progress slows.
- Support staff are effective across the school because they benefit from good training. They make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is not consistently good over time and varies too much between subjects. For example, the 2014 Key Stage 2 test results show that pupils had made good progress in writing but progress in mathematics required improvement. Evidence shows that, this year, achievement in mathematics is improving across the school.
- While pupils typically reach average standards by the time they leave the school, attainment varies considerably between subjects. In 2014, three-fifths of the pupils reached the higher level in writing; in mathematics, this fraction was one-fifth.
- Children make good progress in the Reception class, and this rate of progress continues so that, when pupils leave Year 2, their attainment is typically above average. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in mathematics is lower than in reading or writing.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs requires improvement. However, the school provides effective support for a small number of particularly vulnerable pupils, enabling them to access the curriculum and achieve well.
- With improving teaching, the most-able pupils are beginning to make faster progress. However, there remain occasions in lessons when the work set is not sufficiently demanding to extend their learning.
- Although the gap in performance had previously been narrowing, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 did not do as well as other pupils at the school in 2014. Data show that, in 2013, these pupils were a term behind their classmates in mathematics and in English; last year, the gap widened to three terms. When compared to pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils were around a term behind in reading, three terms behind in writing and four terms behind in mathematics.

The early years provision

is good

- Children start in the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age, although communication and language skills are often below those typical. They make good progress and achieve well as a result of good teaching. As a result, and they are well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- Well-established routines effective procedures for their transition from home or pre-school settings is a smooth one. As a result, children settle in quickly. They are kept safe, behave well and expectations of their conduct are high.

- Early reading and writing are taught well. Children enjoy reading and story times, have opportunities for writing in sentences and are firmly encouraged to hold their pencils correctly. The teaching of phonics in the Reception class is good.
- The staff work well together to ensure that children achieve well. They monitor individual progress closely and use this information to plan appropriate next steps for children's learning. They make use of opportunities to engage children in conversation and to extend their learning.
- The early years provision is led and managed well. The assistant headteacher, who leads the early years, has an accurate view of how well the children are doing and what needs to be improved.
- The classroom has many interesting activities and materials to explore. However, the outdoor area, although well equipped, is not always fully utilised.

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	103469
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	456277

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	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Warner
Headteacher	Alison Pickin
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 January 2012
Telephone number	0121 464 6921
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