

St Alban's Catholic Primary School

Heron Flight Avenue, Hornchurch, Essex, RM12 5LN

Inspection dates 05–06 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Standards reached by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 have remained above the national average since the last inspection.
- In 2014, attainment in reading at the end of Year 2, and grammar, punctuation and spelling attainment at the end of Year 6 were significantly above the national average.
- The headteacher and governors are ambitious for the school. Leadership of teaching has been effective and this has improved pupils' learning.
- Safeguarding procedures are good and as a result, pupils feel safe.
- Pupils make good progress because teaching is good.
- Teaching assistants are highly skilled and make a considerable contribution to pupils' learning.
- Early years provision is outstanding. Children make exceptional progress because activities motivate and engage them.
- Attendance has improved and is above the national average.
- Parents and carers are very positive about the school and say their children are happy in school.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding because the most able pupils are not always consistently challenged and do not always make rapid progress.
- Teachers do not always check to see if pupils are clear about how their work can be improved and that they use the teacher's feedback to improve the quality of their learning.
- Leadership of subjects and year groups is not as effective as it should be because regular, rigorous checks on teaching and learning are not always carried out.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 part lessons, including three jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors also observed small groups of pupils taught by teaching assistants.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and leaders of subjects and other aspects of the school's work. Inspectors also met with six members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read from Year 2 and Year 3. They also held a meeting with a group of pupils and spoke to them during the lunch break.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents they spoke to directly and 68 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire.
- The views of 26 staff who returned questionnaires were taken into account.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the school's improvement and development plan; the school's self-evaluation; the school's information about pupils' attainment and progress; the school's monitoring documents; work in pupils' books; behaviour and attendance records; minutes of governing body meetings; and documentation relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Pervina Saunders, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Victoria Turner

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and about two in ten pupils come from Black African heritage.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages has increased since the last inspection and is above that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is greater than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is less than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium has risen since the last inspection but it is still lower than the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or children who are looked after.
- Children in Reception attend full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- Six new staff joined the school in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by:
 - making sure that the most able pupils are consistently challenged and make rapid progress
 - regularly checking that pupils are clear about how their work can be improved and that they use the teacher's feedback to improve the quality of their learning.

- Increase the impact of subject leaders and leaders responsible for year groups on improving pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring that regular, rigorous checks are made on teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and governors aspire to do the best they can for every child. They have successfully created a very caring, nurturing environment in which pupils want to learn and succeed. Leadership of teaching is strong. Teachers and teaching assistants have been trained well. This has ensured that despite changes in staffing, teaching has remained good and that some of it is now outstanding.
- Pupils' literacy skills have improved and pupils are proficient in applying what they have learned, in other subjects.
- Subject leaders and leaders responsible for year groups are enthusiastic and keen to develop further. They have clear action plans and are beginning to carry out some monitoring activities. They do not, however, check teaching and learning regularly and rigorously and so do not always know where achievement needs to improve more quickly.
- Provision for disadvantaged pupils is highly effective. Their progress is as good as the other pupils in school because they benefit from the good one-to-one or focused group support provided by the learning mentor and teaching assistants.
- Attendance is above the national average. It is closely tracked and absences are rigorously followed up. Effective policies promote equal opportunities for all pupils. Pupils are encouraged to celebrate differences and any discrimination is effectively dealt with.
- Sports funding is used effectively to promote healthy lifestyles. For example, there is a variety of sports clubs and the 'Change for Life' programme ensures pupils are developing a greater awareness of obesity and smoking.
- The school has started to implement the new curriculum. Subjects are taught through learning challenges. Pupils enjoy these challenges and the key questions linked to them. Trips are linked to the current theme. Some pupils are members of the 'The Green Team'. These pupils promote improvement of the environment. For example, they encourage everyone to turn off the lights. As a result of their work the school has achieved the 'ECO Schools' Silver Award'. Pupils also enjoy a number of extra-curricular activities such as film club and gymnastics.
- Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is strong in the school. Assemblies, lessons, trips and the school's 'Forest School' activities all contribute to this. British values are openly taught and pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils vote for school councillors and learn the importance of keeping within the law.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements. This ensures that the pupils are safe and well cared for.
- The local authority has provided good support to improve teaching and the provision in the early years.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Governors are very knowledgeable and know the school well. They are skilled in looking at the school performance data and are clear about the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. They ask informed questions about the performance of different groups of pupils. They visit the school and talk to pupils about their learning so that they can check the impact of the school's work for themselves. Governors have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and how it links to the teachers' standards. They know that good performance is rewarded with a pay rise and that underperformance is tackled through a support plan. Performance management objectives for the headteacher are linked to the school priorities. Governors attend training regularly and have recently carried out an audit of their skills because they are keen to develop further. Close monitoring of the school budget ensures that money, including additional funding, such as the pupil premium and sport premium, is spent wisely.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are positive about their learning and are proud of their school. They are eager to learn and keen to do well in their homework.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. They are polite, smartly dressed and take pride in their work. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well with each other.

- Generally, pupils behave well in lessons and respond to instructions quickly. On rare occasions a few pupils lose their concentration and start to talk about things which are not related to their work.
- Pupils enjoy taking on additional responsibilities. For example, as play leaders they encourage pupils to play games during break times.
- Parents and staff who responded to the questionnaire agree that the behaviour of pupils is good.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The vast majority of parents agree that their children are happy and safe in school.
- Pupils say incidents are few and that they are confident that any bullying would be dealt with quickly by adults. The behaviour records seen by inspectors confirm that the school promotes equal opportunities and tackles any discrimination effectively.
- Pupils are able to explain very clearly how to keep themselves safe when using the computer. Some pupils are 'digi leaders', visiting classes to explain how to keep safe when using modern technology.
- The breakfast club and after-school clubs are popular. They provide a good start and finish to the day for a number of pupils. This has had a positive impact on the pupils' academic achievement.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good across all subjects and as a result, pupils make good progress.
- Teachers expect pupils to apply their reading, writing and mathematics skills in other subjects and pupils do this well.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use technology effectively to enhance their teaching.
- Phonics (letters that sounds make) is taught extremely well and pupils apply their knowledge successfully when they are reading unfamiliar words.
- Pupils respect their teachers. All groups of learners work well together. They help each other and give each other feedback on their work.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use effective questioning to assess pupils' understanding.
- Teaching assistants are experienced and provide good support to pupils in lessons and when working with small groups of pupils.
- Pupils are encouraged to choose tasks for themselves. Teachers explain each task clearly and then help pupils to choose a task that they would find challenging. Sometimes the most able pupils find that the most challenging task on offer is too easy. When teachers do not notice this quickly the most able pupils do not make rapid progress.
- Pupils enjoy their learning, particularly when they are given resources to support their understanding.
- Homework is set regularly and it makes a good contribution to the pupils' learning. However, the most able pupils sometimes find the homework too easy.
- Most teachers are following the school's marking policy. However, teachers do not always check if the pupils have remembered to practise and apply the advice given.

The achievement of pupils is good

- In 2014, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils.
- Pupils also performed better than the national average in the Year 1 phonics check. Pupils are taught well and enjoy reading. They use their phonics knowledge well to read a variety of books. They like to read to their parents at home.
- Current pupils are making good progress. Work in books shows that they are maintaining the high levels of attainment achieved by recent cohorts. Pupils from minority ethnic heritages, including those from Black African backgrounds and those that speak English as an additional language, are achieving as well as their classmates because adults understand their needs and plan appropriate activities to support them.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. This is because knowledgeable adults use well-targeted activities to develop their reading, writing and mathematics skills. They are also well supported in class by both teachers and teaching assistants.

- The most able pupils achieved well in the 2014 national tests. Pupils in Year 2 did particularly well in reading and pupils in Year 6 did particularly well in mathematics. However, the current most able pupils often find their work is too easy. Their progress is better when they are taught in small groups and when the tasks are challenging. For example, a group of Year 6 pupils thoroughly enjoyed battling to solve algebraic equations involving brackets.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. In the 2014 national tests their attainment was better than other pupils nationally by one term in reading, writing and mathematics. The school was awarded the Pupil Premium Award by the Department for Education.
- The gap in school between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others is narrowing. In 2014, disadvantaged pupils were one term ahead of their peers in reading, half a term behind in writing and there was no gap in mathematics.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children enter the Reception class with skills in reading, writing and mathematics that are below those typical for their age. They make rapid progress during their time in early years and are well prepared to continue their learning in Year 1.
- The provision is outstanding because leadership in the early years is strong. The teacher and teaching assistants have high expectations of learning and behaviour. They have created a stimulating learning environment which enables the children to play, learn and explore. Children are safe and well cared for.
- Teaching is outstanding and children are highly motivated because of the exciting learning opportunities available to them. For example, children eagerly followed instructions to make sandwiches for their journey to the moon.
- There are highly effective systems in place to check children's learning. Children's 'Learning Journals' demonstrate the exceptional progress that they make. Parents work closely with the school and add helpful comments in their children's 'Me and My World' books. Parents say their children settle in quickly and that they are well informed about their children's progress.
- Behaviour is outstanding. There is a calm, purposeful atmosphere and all pupils share equipment and play together well. They respond immediately to any requests made by adults.

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	102336
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	449720
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Palmer
Headteacher	Bernadette Matthews
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 December 2009
Telephone number	01708 555644
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