

St Paul's Catholic School

Spencefield Lane, Leicester LE5 6HN

Inspection dates

15–16 December 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not make enough progress by the end of Key Stage 4. Achievement in Key Stage 4 science was inadequate in 2015.
- The quality of teaching is too variable. Not enough teaching meets the needs of different groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs.
- Not all teachers make the necessary checks of pupils' understanding in lessons before moving on to the next task.
- When teaching is less effective, pupils do not behave well enough. A few teachers do not manage pupils' behaviour well enough.
- Leaders have an overly optimistic view of the quality of education provided by the school, particularly with regard to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Leaders have not given sufficient weight to pupils' achievement in their assessments about the quality of teaching.
- The school's improvement plans lack the clear milestones necessary to enable senior staff and governors to check that actions taken are making enough difference to pupils' learning.
- Governors do not check how well different groups of pupils are achieving thoroughly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The school's arrangements to keep pupils safe are strong. Pupils benefit from good pastoral support and are supervised well by teachers and other adults; as a result, pupils feel safe at school.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils value each other's differences and are well informed about cultures and religions different to their own. As a result, pupils from a wide range of backgrounds get along well together.
- The most-able pupils make good progress.
- The additional funding provided to support pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds is now being used well. This funding is having a growing impact in narrowing gaps in achievement.
- Provision for careers education is strong. All pupils who leave the school secure places in further education, training or employment.
- Learners make good progress in the sixth form. A high proportion of sixth form learners secure places at their chosen university.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the current improvements to achievement and attainment in science are maintained so that achievement in science by the end of Key Stage 4 is at least in line with other schools nationally.
- Improve the proportion of good and outstanding teaching, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers make effective use of the rich assessment information they now have to plan learning which fully meets the needs of all groups of pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who have special educational needs
 - making sure teachers routinely check pupils' understanding before moving on to additional tasks
 - ensuring all teachers use questioning effectively to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding
 - ensuring the mathematics curriculum strengthens pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills
 - equipping all teachers with the skills necessary to manage pupils' behaviour so that low-level disruption to learning is eliminated.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leaders, managers and governors in driving improvement, by:
 - ensuring that systems are in place to enable senior leaders and governors to regularly analyse performance information so they have a clear understanding of how well different groups of pupils are doing
 - ensuring that the monitoring of teaching takes sufficient regard of the impact of teaching on the learning of different groups of pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who have special educational needs
 - revising the school's improvement plan so that leaders and governors can more easily monitor the effectiveness of improvement strategies in improving the quality of education provided by the school.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not maintained the good achievement for pupils seen at the time of the last inspection. Achievement in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science, has been too variable. Outcomes in science were inadequate last year and inadequate in English and mathematics in 2014.
- Until recently, assessment arrangements have not provided accurate information about how well pupils are doing. This explains why the school did not meet its predictions for pupils' attainment and progress at Key Stage 4 in 2015.
- The school's self-evaluation is too generous. Leaders' and governors' analysis of past and current performance information does not pay sufficient regard to groups that achieve less well than others. Senior leaders' and governors' overarching analysis of the performance of different groups of pupils is not searching enough.
- Improvement plans do not set sufficiently clear, measurable targets to enable leaders and governors to check how much difference the actions being taken are making. Plans do not indicate who is responsible for doing this checking or how, and when the impact of the improvements will be checked.
- While improvements to teaching have been secured this year and are contributing to improved achievement, the school's evaluations of the quality of teaching are overgenerous. This is because lesson observations do not focus sufficiently sharply on the impact of teaching on pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, lower attainers and those who have special educational needs.
- Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum fully meets the needs of all groups of pupils. This is because leaders have not ensured lessons consistently meet the needs of the full range of pupils, particularly in the increased proportion of lessons taught in mixed-ability classes. Leaders recognise that the Key Stage 4 science curriculum did not meet pupils' needs well enough last year. Appropriate changes have now been made.
- The school's curriculum does, however, make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong and is enhanced by good extra-curricular provision, including in the arts and sport. The curriculum promotes fundamental British values well.
- The school has responded well to government changes to the National Curriculum and leaders have designed a coherent, effective and innovative way of charting pupils' progress in all subjects as they move through the school. The new arrangements have been introduced very effectively and are well understood by staff and pupils. Good-quality information is provided to parents so that they can keep track of how well their children are doing.
- The use of assessment to check how well pupils are doing in each of their subjects is now much stronger than before. For example, Year 11 practice examinations now replicate closely the final GCSE examinations pupils will face at the end of their courses. Leaders and teachers have worked with staff from other schools to ensure that the marking of assessments is accurate. This improved use of assessment is helping to raise pupils' achievement, by identifying the weaknesses pupils need to tackle. It is now ensuring that pupils currently on roll are catching up with where they should be.
- The school is now making good use of the additional funding provided to support pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Leaders have sought advice from an outstanding local school and used educational research to devise strategies to help tackle the particular challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils. Close monitoring of individual pupils' progress is enabling more rapid support to be provided if they fall behind. Effective strategies have been deployed to increase parents' confidence in supporting their children's learning. As a result, despite the weaknesses in teaching seen, the gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school are narrowing, including in English and mathematics.
- The additional funding provided to support pupils who have not attained well enough in English and mathematics is being used well to strengthen these pupils' basic skills, for example in reading.
- The headteacher is well regarded by staff and pupils. He is ambitious for the school and has maintained a strong ethos in which pupils conduct themselves well around the school site and treat each other considerately. Teachers recognise and welcome the increased monitoring of their practice introduced by the headteacher and the accompanying opportunities for professional development.

- The headteacher has taken decisive action to tackle the weakest teaching and, with support from governors, ensures that teachers' pay is closely linked to the pupils' achievement.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have strong understanding of their responsibilities and have played a key role in articulating, reviewing and driving the school's vision and ethos
 - Governors make a strong contribution to the school's effective safeguarding arrangements by checking for themselves that child protection arrangements meet requirements and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures
 - Governors have provided good support for the headteacher in managing the rebuilding of the school's premises, including through providing specialist expertise
 - However, governors do not have sufficiently secure understanding of performance information to hold leaders fully to account for pupils' past and current achievement. They have not monitored the impact of the additional funding the school has received for pupils who enter Year 7 with low attainment in English and mathematics
 - Arrangements for the governance of the school have recently been reviewed to help strengthen this aspect of leadership and management. However, it is too soon to see the impact of these changes.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Rigorous background checks are made on all staff and safeguarding policies and procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure they are effective. Staff receive regular up-to-date child protection training which pays due regard to updates to legislation and is responsive to local safeguarding concerns. The school makes sure that pupils who receive part of their education elsewhere are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- While leaders and managers have eradicated inadequate teaching, too much teaching continues to require improvement.
- In discussions, pupils from Key Stages 3 and 4 reported that there is considerable variation in the quality of teaching they receive, particularly when they are taught in mixed-ability groups. Inspectors' observations of teaching confirmed the pupils' views to be accurate.
- Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not make sufficient use of the assessment information they hold about pupils' attainment and progress to plan activities to fully meet the needs of the whole group. Leaders ensure that teachers identify in their planning which of the pupils they teach are from disadvantaged backgrounds or have special educational needs, but some teachers do not use this information well enough to inform the way they approach lessons. As a result, in the lessons observed, pupils' rates of progress varied too much.
- Similarly, not all teachers check that all groups of pupils understand the work before moving on to the next task. This means that pupils who need extra help are not always identified so that further support can be put in place. In these lessons, some pupils lose focus and become distracted. This hinders the progress of the whole group, particularly when teachers do not manage low-level disruption effectively.
- While mathematics teaching strengthens pupils' understanding of how to tackle the tasks set, only occasionally does teaching in mathematics build pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills.
- In these weaker lessons, teachers' questioning is not searching or probing enough to accelerate pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- These weaknesses contrast sharply with the most effective teaching in the school. For example, in the design and technology, religious education, history and geography lessons seen, as well as some English, mathematics and science lessons, pupils made strong gains in their learning because of the teachers' high expectations, clear instructions and careful planning to ensure that the needs of all groups of pupils were fully met.
- Teaching in the top sets and in the sixth form is strong. In these lessons, pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations and strong subject knowledge and make good gains in their learning.
- Robust action to tackle the weakest science teaching is proving effective in raising the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in science.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is very effective. Pupils respond well to the opportunities they are given to improve their work, as a result of the precise feedback they are given, including following practice tests.

- Pupils who receive bespoke interventions to tackle their specific learning difficulties achieve well, for example by improving their reading skills. Good teaching in 'the hub' ensures that pupils who receive extra support in a range of curriculum subjects are making better progress than before.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils feel safe at the school because they know that teachers and other adults will provide rapid and effective support if ever they experience difficulties.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and manage risk, including when using the internet. The school's curriculum ensures pupils are alert to the dangers of radicalisation and extremism and other risks to their well-being, for example through child sexual exploitation.
- Pupils report that bullying is very rare and is tackled very well by staff when it does occur.
- Pupils from all backgrounds get along well together. They value each other's differences and treat each other kindly. Pupils are very well informed about cultures and religions different to their own and have a good understanding of the diverse experiences, culture and beliefs of others within the United Kingdom.
- Pupils are committed to supporting charitable causes, for example through the money they raise to support partner schools in Ghana.
- Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced by a rich programme of extra-curricular activities, including through strong provision for sport and the arts.
- Pupils are well informed about a wide range of career opportunities. They receive good advice in planning their future careers and in selecting the courses which best match their career aspirations. Particularly strong support is provided for disadvantaged pupils and their parents in identifying future career paths. As a result, all pupils who leave the school go on to secure education, training or employment. This has been the case for the past five years.
- The school's use of alternative education providers makes a positive contribution to the good personal development, behaviour and welfare of the small number of Key Stage 4 pupils who receive some of their education elsewhere, for example through the training they receive in bicycle maintenance or motor vehicle mechanics or through the Prince's Trust.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because some pupils misbehave when teaching does not meet their needs well enough or when teachers do not manage behaviour effectively. This is particularly the case in the lower sets and in mixed-ability classes.
- The school's work to support pupils who have previously exhibited the most challenging behaviour is very effective. As a result, permanent exclusions from the school are rare and the proportions of pupils subject to fixed-term exclusion are low and continually reducing.
- Pupils' attendance overall is above average. However, a small proportion of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds do not attend regularly enough.
- Pupils arrive punctually to school and lessons and conduct themselves well at break and lunchtimes and as they move around the school. They wear their uniform with pride and most take care over the presentation of their work.
- Pupils report that they are proud of their school. They welcome visitors to the school warmly and express their opinions confidently and articulately.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes have been too variable by the end of Key Stage 4 in the last two years as judged by pupils' achievements in their GCSE examinations. While the proportion of pupils attaining five or more good qualifications, including in English and mathematics, is in line with the national picture, pupils have not attained well enough, given their broadly average starting points, across the full range of subjects studied. Achievement in the 2015 GCSE science examinations was particularly poor.
- Gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school and nationally narrowed but remained too

wide in both English and mathematics. In particular, middle-ability disadvantaged pupils did not make the progress they should have by the end of their courses.

- The school's current performance information, based on much more rigorous assessment than before, indicates that the achievement of pupils currently on roll is improving. This includes the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Achievement in science is also improving, though a minority of Key Stage 4 pupils continue to underachieve in double science.
- The most-able pupils make good progress at the school. This includes pupils currently pursuing three separate science qualifications. Progress is less consistent for middle- and lower-ability pupils.
- Pupils who receive specialist support to tackle specific learning difficulties make good progress in 'the hub'. Similarly, pupils at the early stages of learning English improve their language skills quickly. However, as for other pupils, in lessons progress remains inconsistent for pupils who have special educational needs and for those who speak English as an additional language.
- The school's work to improve the reading ages of pupils who join with underdeveloped reading comprehension skills is good and secures rapid gains in pupils' reading ages.
- Good support for children who are looked after ensures that these pupils achieve well.
- Similarly, well-tailored plans to meet the needs of pupils who receive part of their education elsewhere ensure that these pupils make good progress on their vocational courses.
- Learners' good progress in the sixth form prepares them well for further education, employment or training.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- Learners make good progress on their sixth form courses and many secure places at their first-choice university. All learners complete their courses.
- Achievement in the sixth form since the last inspection has been mostly good, although it dipped last year because of poor results in biology, chemistry and business studies. Decisive action to tackle the weakest teaching is now ensuring that learners on these courses are making good progress.
- Learners who join the sixth form without having secured good GCSE qualifications in English and/or mathematics make good progress in improving their skills. Last year, almost all improved their GCSE grade and over half secured a grade C or above. Conversion rates to grade C or above are much better than seen nationally.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good and some is outstanding. Learners reported to inspectors their high levels of satisfaction with the quality of sixth form teaching overall. They did say, however, that in a very small minority of subjects, teaching is less strong. Inspection evidence confirmed their views to be accurate.
- The rich curriculum promotes learners' personal development well through a good range of non-qualification activities. This includes mentoring younger pupils at the school and in other schools and opportunities to develop basic cooking skills, their understanding of British and world history and their aptitude in speaking a foreign language. A few learners told inspectors that they would value more education in life skills, for example to improve their understanding of mortgages and taxation, and more sex and relationship education.
- Learners receive good-quality information, advice and guidance. They are well supported in selecting courses that meet their aspirations and aptitudes before joining the sixth form and receive first-rate guidance in completing their university applications. Learners benefit from wide-ranging and impartial advice, including through the information they are given about courses available elsewhere and alternative career pathways, including apprenticeships.
- Good leadership by the head of sixth form ensures that learners' progress and personal development are monitored closely so that effective action is taken when learners fall behind or when their attendance drops below expectations.

School details

Unique reference number	120307
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10001422

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,072
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Laura O'Brien
Headteacher	Neil Lockyer
Telephone number	0116 241 4057
Website	http://www.st-pauls.leicester.sch.uk
Email address	office@st-pauls.leicester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 December 2012

Information about this school

- St Paul's Catholic School is slightly larger than the average secondary school. Pupils travel from all over the east of the city and county to attend this school.
- Pupils come from a diverse range of backgrounds, and over half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Around a third of pupils speak English as an additional language. Of these, a very small minority are at the early stages of learning English.
- Around one quarter of pupils are disadvantaged, which is similar to other secondary schools nationally.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to other schools nationally. Very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- A small number of Key Stage 4 pupils receive part of their education elsewhere through three providers of alternative education: Community Giants, Future Cycles, and AXLR8.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 37 lessons. On the first day of the inspection, inspectors made short visits to 11 lessons. Longer periods of learning were observed in 26 lessons on the second day of the inspection. In each of the visits to lessons, inspectors scrutinised pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, a range of middle leaders and a group of teachers.
- Inspectors met the Chair of the Governing Body and a Foundation Governor. They also spoke by telephone to the school's Raising Achievement Associate, employed by the local authority, and with a representative from Future Cycles.
- Inspectors held formal discussions in meetings with pupils in each year group, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs, and spoke to pupils informally during lessons and around the school.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation summary and improvement plan, safeguarding records, performance information, the school's report on its use of funding to support disadvantaged pupils and records relating to the management of teachers' performance.
- Inspectors took account of the 49 responses to Parent View and the 60 staff survey responses received, as well as 25 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Daniel Burton, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nina Bee	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Fullbrook	Ofsted Inspector
Frances Le Pla	Ofsted Inspector
Laurence Reilly	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Wilson	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2016

