

St John Payne Catholic School

Patching Hall Lane, Chelmsford CM1 4BS

Inspection dates 12–13 January 2016

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Determined and resolute leadership from senior leaders has driven widespread improvements since the last inspection.
- Standards are high; in 2015, the school achieved its best ever GCSE results. Gaps in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils compared with others narrowed significantly.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Most learners make exceptional progress. A level results are consistently very high.
- The majority of teachers use their detailed subject knowledge to plan learning that stimulates and engages pupils. They foster good relations with pupils and encourage them to work hard.
- The vast majority of pupils attend regularly, behave well and contribute fully to making school a safe, harmonious and enjoyable place to be.
- Experienced and effective governance ensures that pupils are kept safe and school leaders are held accountable for securing improvements.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils are confident, assured and conduct themselves well amongst peers and adults. The school's Catholic ethos makes an excellent contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- The curriculum prepares pupils well for further education or training and helps them to develop a broad understanding of the different values, cultures and beliefs of people in Britain and beyond.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs receive the care and support they need to make sufficient progress.
- Parents and carers value the education provided for their children. They praise the transition arrangements, high standards achieved and the caring, community ethos promoted by staff.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The very best teaching has not been shared fully to make teaching consistently good.
- Not all teachers manage behaviour consistently, plan learning matched to pupils' needs and abilities, or have high expectations of them.
- Development plans do not include enough detail to enable school leaders to routinely monitor whether their actions are securing further improvements at a suitable rate.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching consistently good and regularly outstanding by:
 - planning learning that is matched to the different needs and abilities of pupils
 - applying the agreed procedures to manage pupils' behaviour in lessons
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving
 - using the most effective teachers to share and promote best practice
 - routinely monitoring the impact of these improvements on the learning and progress of all pupils.

- Improve the quality of school improvement planning at all levels by:
 - including clear actions and measurable targets, indicating who is responsible for monitoring them, and how and when these actions will be evaluated to ensure that they lead to further improvement.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher provides the school with clear, coherent leadership. His high aspirations and expectations of all pupils shape the school's caring culture and Catholic ethos. He leads by example: emphasising the importance of showing tolerance, understanding and respect for others and promoting the school's commitment to equal opportunity for all pupils, including those from non-Catholic backgrounds.
- A team of senior leaders provides an effective blend of knowledge, experience and new ideas to drive further improvement. Together, they have responded promptly to a slight dip in performance last year, due mainly to staffing issues. Their actions to strengthen staffing and improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils in 2015 have restored the school's reputation for high standards.
- The curriculum is managed carefully to ensure that pupils can pursue their interests and ensure that most of them attain the essential basic skills and GCSE qualifications that they need for the next stage of their lives. Pathways from Year 11 into the sixth form, and onto higher education or training are firmly established.
- Senior leaders have forged strong links with other Catholic schools in the region. They have recently engaged in a 'triad' with two neighbouring schools to share ideas and promote further improvement. Good relations with the local authority provide the school with regular support and challenge to help it develop. Staff foster good relations with parents and carers. Pastoral staff are always available to deal with issues arising and the school website includes details of how contact with staff can be made.
- Senior leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is that it is outstanding. Inspection evidence does not support this. Senior leaders can point to significant gains in outcomes for pupils in Key Stage 4, and the sustained, outstanding performance of learners in the sixth form. However, their leadership of teaching is not sufficiently focused on making it outstanding.
- Senior leaders acknowledge that there is more to do to build on the widespread improvements made this year. Not enough attention has been paid to spreading the exemplary teaching, learning and assessment in the school across and within all subjects, to iron out inconsistencies and make it outstanding. Regular learning walks provide an overview of overall strengths and weaknesses, but these are not backed up with intensive monitoring of lessons where teaching is known to be less effective.
- To strengthen this, the school is investing in its middle leaders: providing them with the support and resources they need to develop their staff and raise pupils' achievement. They are beginning to systematically monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in their departments, and formulate plans to improve them. Not all of these plans include clear, numeric targets to illustrate the improvements made, or to hold staff accountable for achieving them.
- School improvement plans rightly prioritise the main areas for development and include summary criteria to check whether these improvements are made. However, they also lack numeric targets to hold senior leaders fully accountable, or enable them to check at key intervals whether the actions they are taking are leading to improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are professional, organised and effective. They share the headteacher's vision and aspirations for the school and provide him with their full, unequivocal support. They show a realistic understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and hold senior leaders accountable for making improvements.
 - School finances are tightly controlled. They ensure that the catch-up grant and pupil premium funding are used effectively to raise achievement.
 - Records show that the governors' pay committee oversees the management of teachers' performance and ensures that only the most effective teachers are rewarded with salary increases.
 - Governors keep up to date with current developments in safeguarding by attending training about extremism and the risk of radicalisation, and about the promotion of fundamental British values.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- A large proportion of teaching is highly effective and enables pupils to make rapid progress. However, inconsistencies across and within subjects remain a barrier to the school becoming outstanding.
- In the majority of lessons, pupils are eager to learn and keen to contribute. Learning is matched to their ability. More-able pupils are set challenging tasks, including homework that stimulates their interest. They are set clear timescales to complete work neatly and efficiently, and are given time to review what they have done to see if they can improve it. Expert subject knowledge enables teachers to pose challenging questions that test pupils' understanding, promote independent thought and reflection.
- Less-able pupils are set tasks that they understand and can do, and are shown the step-by-step stages to complete them. Pupils are set targets, and regular testing and assessments are used to gauge whether they are on track to achieve them. Behaviour is managed well using set procedures to prevent minor disruption from escalating.
- Lesson observations, the majority of which were carried out jointly with senior leaders, revealed that these features are not evident in all lessons. Not all teachers apply common procedures to manage pupils' behaviour. Low expectations and ineffective use of assessment information leads to pupils doing work that is either too difficult for them or is well within their capabilities. Teaching assistants are not always deployed well enough in lessons to support the learning of lower-ability pupils.
- The quality of feedback given to pupils about their work is dependent on the different approaches of each subject. Where this is well-established, such as in English and geography, pupils receive regular, diagnostic feedback about the quality of their work and what they need to do to improve it. Elsewhere, marking is sporadic, at times cursory and has little impact on generating improvement.
- Regular assessments provide leaders with a broad overview of how well pupils are progressing. This information is largely consistent across subjects but is dependent on the assessments made by teachers, some of whom are not as effective as they should be. Staff use this information well in Key Stage 3 to inform them of those pupils who need additional help to catch up in their basic literacy and numeracy skills, and in Year 11 to target support towards pupils at risk of not meeting their GCSE targets.
- 'Drop everything and read', accelerated reader and regular guided reading are used effectively to strengthen pupils' basic literacy skills and encourage reading for pleasure. A range of subjects other than English, particularly religious studies, help to reinforce literacy by requiring pupils to read information at length, comprehend its meaning and compose full answers to questions. Other than in mathematics, there are fewer examples of promoting pupils' numeracy skills in lessons.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school's strong and pervasive Catholic ethos and inclusive approach to pupils of different faiths enhance pupils' personal development and provide them with an exceptional spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Weekly assemblies provide time for prayer and reflection, as well as time for pupils to consider how they can apply the meaning of readings from the Gospels to their own lives. Religious studies lessons enable them to gain a full understanding of right from wrong, and to consider the lives of those from different cultural and religious backgrounds.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school and the importance they place on gaining good qualifications is shown in their regular attendance and good punctuality. They are polite, courteous and wear their uniforms with pride.
- Pupils are enthusiastic, keen to learn and to contribute to school life. They act as prefects, captains and counsellors, and some readily volunteer to help others in need in the local community. Some welcome the opportunity to show their commitment to their faith by reading aloud from the bible during school assemblies.
- Weekly personal, social and health education lessons, including citizenship, equip pupils with the knowledge and understanding that they need to look after themselves, and to take care of others. They know how to remain safe in and out of school and are fully aware of the risks attached to using

social media.

- Pupils value opportunities to discuss future careers, listen to visitors' talks about the world of work and appreciate the regular guidance provided for them by an independent careers adviser.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are self-disciplined and behave exceptionally well around school at breaks and lunchtimes.
- The vast majority of pupils conduct themselves well in lessons, but this exceptional behaviour is undermined by a very small minority of pupils who are allowed to disrupt the learning of others in some lessons.
- Pupils told inspectors that school is a safe place to be. When bullying occurs, mostly name calling and showing-off, pupils know who to approach to resolve it.
- Detailed records of pupils' behaviour, incidents of racism or bullying are maintained. This information is routinely shared with staff and governors to identify patterns and show the impact of their work in reducing such incidents.
- Very few pupils are excluded from school. The proportion of pupils referred to the school's inclusion room for misbehaviour in lessons is low and shows a falling trend.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Overall achievement is high. In 2015, over three-quarters of Year 11 pupils attained at least five GCSE A* to C grades, including English and mathematics. Over four fifths of them attained at least a C grade in English and in mathematics, which is well above that found nationally. From their above average starting points, the vast majority of these pupils made expected progress in English and mathematics. Notably, the proportions of them making more than expected progress was higher than average.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils attaining five or more C grades, including English and mathematics, was also well above average, illustrating the impact of actions taken by senior leaders to enhance the support provided for these pupils to enable them to achieve as well as others. Their overall progress has also improved since the last inspection, albeit at a slower rate.
- Senior leaders have recognised that fewer disadvantaged students make more than expected progress compared with other pupils, and that this remains an area for further improvement. Gaps in their achievement compared with others are closing rapidly. This is because a member of staff with discrete responsibility for them routinely monitors their academic progress, personal development and welfare, and liaises with subject leaders to determine the best use of pupil premium funding to aid their progress.
- The overall progress made by all pupils by the end of Key Stage 4, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs, has risen year-on-year since the last inspection. Current data indicates that in most year groups, this improving trend is set to continue. However, lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work shows that, currently, not all pupils make enough progress in lessons due to inconsistencies in teaching.
- Results in most subjects are well above average. However, the outcomes in core science and a few foundation subjects remain stubbornly lower than in other subjects, partly due to staffing changes and a lack of accountability of some subject leaders.

16 to 19 study programmes

are outstanding

- The high standards and excellent progress made by learners noted at the time of the last inspection have been sustained. Value-added measures show that, overall, learners' performance is similar to the results achieved in the top 10% of schools nationally.
- During the inspection, inspectors were unable to observe lessons as learners were either on study leave or involved in mock examinations. Senior leaders' evaluation shows that good teaching and high-quality care for learners enables them to achieve highly.

- Provision is almost exclusively A level courses. From their average starting points, learners make rapid progress and achieve AS and A level results that are well above national averages. In 2015, the proportions of learners attaining higher A* and A grades, and A* to B grades was very high.
- A very small proportion of learners join Year 12 without a C grade in either GCSE English or in mathematics. Leaders ensure that almost all of them attain these essential qualifications by the time they leave the sixth form.
- Learners make exceptional progress in business studies, economics, geography and law. They make less progress in general studies. Over the last two years, a small proportion of disadvantaged learners in receipt of a bursary payment successfully completed three A levels by the end of Year 13, and progressed onto the university of their choice.
- Retention rates are very high. Almost all Year 12 learners continue their studies into Year 13. Most progress onto higher education. They value the regular information and advice given to them about future career opportunities and the help that they receive from form tutors and other staff in completing applications to university.
- Learners' personal development and welfare is enriched by a wide range of additional activities. Learners are encouraged to volunteer as mentors for younger pupils, assist staff in organising sports, arts and religious events, support the work of the neighbouring special school and raise funds for charity. They know how to keep themselves safe in and outside of school.
- The limited accommodation for sixth form teaching, private study and socialising is acknowledged by school leaders. Improving this provision is included in the school's improvement plan.

School details

Unique reference number	115238
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10000740

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1171
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adrian Dalley
Headteacher	Antony Schular
Telephone number	01245256030
Website	www.sjp.essex.sch.uk
Email address	office@sjp.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 November 2011

Information about this school

- The school is larger than average.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average.
- The school makes arrangements to educate a very small proportion of pupils off-site at the Heybridge Alternative Provision School, or at the CTP Training Centre, Harlow.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 44 lessons, most of which were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, two groups of pupils, five governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including safeguarding policy and procedures, self-evaluation and improvement plans, minutes of meetings of the governing body, assessment data, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance and other information provided by the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' books in lessons.
- Inspectors considered 161 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 69 free texts sent by parents and carers.

Inspection team

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