

St Pius X RC Primary School

Gatehouse Avenue, Withywood, Bristol BS13 9AB

Inspection dates

15–16 March 2016

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

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	Inadequate
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Teaching has not been good enough over time and pupils' progress has been too slow. Pupils have left the school without the skills in reading, writing and mathematics to enable them to succeed in the next stage of their education.
- Expectations of what the most-able pupils can achieve are too low.
- Pupils struggle to complete mathematical calculations. Too many pupils do not have a good grasp of mathematical vocabulary and have difficulty understanding the problems they are set.
- Pupils do not receive clear enough feedback from teachers to help them improve their learning.
- Too many pupils have below-average rates of attendance or arrive late for school.
- Pupils' inability to use a wide range of vocabulary hinders the development of their reading and writing skills.
- Subject leadership and leadership of the Early Years have not been strong enough over time to make the necessary improvements to pupils' achievement.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to apply their reading, writing and mathematical skills in other subjects.
- School leaders have not checked carefully enough whether the use of pupil premium funding is improving pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The interim headteacher and assistant headteacher understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are working closely with the new governors to tackle the weaker areas.
- Improvements have been made to the way teachers assess pupils' learning.
- Pupils are attentive in lessons. They feel safe and well cared for and appreciate increased opportunities for involvement in extra-curricular activities.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching across the school, in order to increase pupils' progress and raise their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, by:
 - making best use of assessment information to guide the planning of lessons so that the work set is at the right level, including making sure that the most-able pupils are fully challenged
 - improving feedback to pupils on their written and mathematical work so that they know how to improve
 - improving pupils' confident recall of number facts and their understanding of mathematical vocabulary
 - supporting pupils to develop an understanding of, and ability to use in context, a rich and varied vocabulary.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance by:
 - ensuring that subject leaders, and the leader of the Early Years, develop the knowledge and skills necessary to enable them to contribute fully to the process of school improvement
 - developing the curriculum so that pupils have more opportunities to apply their reading, writing and mathematical skills to support their learning in other subjects
 - continuing to work with parents to increase pupils' attendance and punctuality at the start of the day
 - checking closely that the spending of the pupil premium funding helps those eligible for its support to achieve as well as they can.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management might be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- School leaders have not been able to reverse the impact of long-term underachievement, despite recent improvements.
- Too little attention has been paid to checking that funding received to support the progress of disadvantaged pupils has been spent wisely. Consequently, the school is unable to identify what has worked well, and what needs to be changed or improved to better support pupils with their learning.
- Pupils' punctuality and overall attendance are not good enough. However, the new parent support adviser, together with the education welfare officer, is beginning to tackle the poor attendance rates. This includes effective support to families in obtaining external help to overcome obstacles to good attendance, such as health or housing issues.
- The development of subject leaders, and other leaders in the school including the Early Years, is in its early stages. These middle leaders do not, as yet, have all the knowledge and skills they need to lead and manage their areas without considerable help. Support from experienced and skilled teachers and leaders from other schools has been welcomed and acted on. Activities such as curriculum subject reviews and the checking of pupils' work in books are beginning to develop middle leaders' understanding of what they need to do to accelerate pupils' progress.
- Since their appointment, the interim headteacher and assistant headteacher have acted quickly to bring about some key improvements. They challenged the poor behaviour of some pupils immediately and swiftly implemented systems to better manage the behaviour of all pupils. These actions have transformed the school, making it a place where teachers can teach and pupils can learn.
- Senior leaders are developing the curriculum to provide pupils with experiences that help them to enjoy and see the relevance of their learning. For example, pupils in Year 4 were observed writing fact files about Ancient Greek gods, a topic that they found interesting and engaging. However, teachers do not typically plan for pupils to use their reading, writing and mathematical skills across all subjects.
- The evaluation of the school's performance is now accurate and is reflected in the school's improvement plan. Priorities for improvement are clearly identified and action plans detail what needs to be done to bring about positive change. Procedures for monitoring and managing teachers' performance have been tightened to better hold them to account for pupils' progress.
- The range of after-school activities is increasing. Pupils particularly enjoy the opportunities they have to play sport. PE and sport funding has been well targeted to improve teachers' skills and to expand the opportunities for pupils to engage in a wider range of sporting activities. Pupils have been successful in local competitions and have enjoyed the experience of visiting other venues in the area.
- The support provided by the local authority and the national leader of education has been rightly re-focused on improving teaching, the Early Years provision and the leadership skills of the assistant headteacher. This is now contributing to more effective school improvement. For example, the assistant headteacher is successfully leading improvements in teaching including refining the accuracy of teachers' assessment of pupils' work. Nonetheless, the local authority has not supported the school well enough over time to prevent the decline in pupils' outcomes.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The recent changes to governance, including the appointment of a very experienced chair and new vice-chair of governors, have quickly accelerated the pace of school improvement. Using their professional expertise, they have challenged the way that the school has been led in the past and secured the services of the highly experienced interim headteacher with a track record for school improvement. They have created a new strategy for securing the long-term stability of leadership at the school. They are fully committed to ensuring that the school serves its community well.
 - Following the turbulent history of the school, the new governors are working closely with the local authority and the diocese to secure the best possible outcomes for pupils and staff. The governors are now robustly holding leaders to account for the school's performance and are keeping a regular check on progress against the school's improvement plan. Governors are keeping a very close eye on improvements to teaching and its impact on pupils' progress.
 - Governors now ensure that teachers' performance is monitored closely by the interim headteacher and is appropriately linked to the national teachers' standards and pupils' performance.
 - Governors are fully aware that, in the past, pupil premium funding has not been used effectively to

improve the progress of those pupils who are eligible for these extra funds. They have started to check more closely how the funding is spent and have a better understanding of the effectiveness of its use. They know that the spending of the PE and sport funding has increased opportunities for pupils and helped teachers to develop their confidence when teaching sport.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The parent support adviser works very closely with other agencies to support the most vulnerable pupils and their families. Staff have received relevant safeguarding training and, where appropriate, additional training to support pupils with particular behavioural difficulties. Good attention is paid to promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, together with their understanding and appreciation of British values. As a result the vast majority of pupils enjoy each other's company and socialise amicably. The provision of a free breakfast club during term time benefits many pupils and ensures that they have a positive start to their day at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Over time, teachers' expectations have not been high enough and, consequently, too many pupils have not reached the standard of which they are capable. Teachers welcome the support they now receive to understand the expectations of the new curriculum and how to assess pupils' work accurately.
- The recent improvements made to the way that pupils' learning is assessed enables teachers to check pupils' progress more frequently and more accurately. This is ensuring that a close eye is kept on those who may need additional support. Teachers now ensure that their judgements are accurate by moderating pupils' progress together.
- Teachers' planning has started to take account of what pupils are expected to know in each year group. They are beginning to help pupils to plug the gaps in their learning from previous years. Nevertheless, teaching is still not consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils are making accelerated progress to overcome their past underachievement.
- Teachers mark pupils' work in line with the school's expectations and typically comments are made that identify for pupils what they have done well. However, written feedback to pupils about how they might improve is at times too vague and does not help them to understand what they need to do next. In contrast, some teachers' oral feedback enables pupils to correct errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation and to move on with their learning quickly.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and increasingly plan activities that interest and engage pupils. A range of strategies are used to keep pupils motivated and engaged. For example, pupils in Year 2 were captivated as their teacher withdrew items linked to the story of the three bears from a large bag. At times, however, activities are too hard for pupils or do not challenge the most-able pupils to demonstrate the depth and breadth of their learning.
- Teaching has not focused sufficiently on ensuring that pupils are competent in the swift mental recall of number facts. Pupils in Year 5 worked hard to complete a times table challenge but many had to make a calculation to work out the answers. Their limited recall slows the rate at which they complete more complicated calculations.
- Improvements to how teachers use questioning and praise is helping pupils to be clear about the expected quality of their learning and widen their range of vocabulary. For example, Year 6 pupils were challenged to think of words to describe how Willie from the book 'Goodnight Mr Tom' might feel on his first day at school. Praise and encouragement from their teacher helped them to keep thinking, and to make suggestions such as 'miserable', 'forlorn' and 'deflated'. Following this focused and challenging start to the lesson pupils were able to write sentences such as, 'I woke with butterflies swarming in my tummy'.
- The impact of extensive training and support for the teaching of letters and the sounds that they make (phonics), particularly in the Reception class, is now helping pupils to spell words for themselves and read unfamiliar text with confidence.
- The recent improvements made to behaviour management have had a significant impact on pupils' learning. Teachers manage behaviour well now and learning has improved because lessons are calm and purposeful. Skilled, well-briefed teaching assistants are deployed well to work with individuals and groups. They make a positive contribution to pupils' engagement and learning in lessons.
- Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Respect and trust underpin the supportive relationships forged between adults and pupils, and between pupils themselves.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are beginning to understand what it takes to be a successful learner. They recognise that good behaviour is an essential element of good learning. They know that they need to work hard to get qualifications if they want a good job when they are older.
- Typically, most pupils work together well when discussing ideas or checking answers to the work they are set. A few pupils still find working cooperatively with other pupils a difficult thing to do.
- Pupils who need additional support are well cared for. Pupils spoken to said they felt safe at school and that they are well looked after. They are confident that adults would support them if they had a worry or concern. Pupils have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using modern technology.
- Pupils are enjoying being trusted more with responsibilities, such as being a school councillor or representing their school in sport. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. As a result, pupils are reflective, are able to appreciate the views of others and have a strong sense of right and wrong. Most pupils enjoy the company of their classmates and form secure friendships. Pupils' cultural development and appreciation of British values is developing well because opportunities to pursue these aspects are built into the planning of the curriculum.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- In lessons, most pupils settle quickly to their tasks and listen carefully to their teachers, teaching assistants and each other. A few pupils take time to settle at the start of lessons and when changing activities during a lesson. This slows down the learning for all pupils.
- Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner. They behave well when at the breakfast club or during playtimes.
- The large majority of pupils attend school regularly. However, too many have attendance levels that are below average, and for some, their attendance is low. In addition, some pupils regularly arrive late for the start of school in the morning.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming. They have a good understanding of the school's expectations and articulate clearly the significant improvement in pupils' behaviour since the beginning of the year. They say that bullying is rare and dealt with swiftly if it does occur.

Outcomes for pupils are inadequate

- Pupils' progress in all subjects has been too slow for too long. Results in the national tests and teacher assessments have been low for a number of years and pupils have been unprepared for the next stage of their education. This has been true for children moving up through all year groups in the school and for Year 6 pupils moving into secondary education.
- Since the appointment of the interim headteacher and key governors, there have been improvements to teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. In all year groups, pupils' learning in lessons, the work in their books and the school's assessment information show that most pupils are now making at least the expected progress. An increasing number of pupils are making accelerated progress but not enough to eradicate the underachievement of previous years.
- Gaps in performance between disadvantaged and other pupils are not significant, but both groups fall well short of the performance of other pupils nationally. There is little difference between the performance of boys and girls.
- Improvements are gathering momentum through the school. An increasing proportion of children in the early years are working towards securing a good level of development. Improved phonics teaching is helping more pupils to read and write words accurately so that standards in Years 1 and 2 are rising. Whole-school assessment information indicates that more pupils this year will reach the level expected for their year group than in past years.
- Recently school leaders have taken steps to improve the limited vocabulary of many pupils when they start school, and which hinders their performance in reading and writing. As a consequence, pupils have started to think of words to enliven their written work and understand the meaning of the words they have read.

- Pupils' performance in mathematics is impeded by their often very slow recall of number facts, and their lack of understanding of the subject specific vocabulary used.
- Typically, pupils who have special educational needs or a disability make expected progress and a few make good progress. Nonetheless, the support they receive is not monitored closely enough to make sure it is helping pupils to make the best possible progress from their starting points.
- The school keeps a close check on pupils' personal, social and emotional development. Some pupils experience significant difficulties in engaging positively with their peers and with learning in lessons. As a result of the work undertaken by the parent support adviser and very capable teaching assistants, these pupils are increasingly able to develop productive relationships with others and to make better progress in their learning.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- Recent support provided by the assistant headteacher and staff from other local schools has started to improve the teaching and learning in the Reception class. The impact of this support is beginning to be evident in the improved range of activities planned, and the focus on developing children's early reading, writing and mathematics skills.
- Effective procedures prior to children starting school help children to settle quickly and happily. Further opportunities are provided for parents to be involved with the school to support their child's learning through 'stay and play' sessions.
- Children often start school with limited communication and language skills. Their personal, social and emotional development is also much lower than typically found for their age. Activities are now being planned to support these areas. This is ensuring that currently most children are now making at least expected progress, with a few making better than expected progress.
- Checks on children's progress are increasingly accurate. The information gathered is being used to plan a curriculum that interests and engages children so that they can learn well. Children's ideas and interests are included in planning to capture their enthusiasm. An increasing proportion of children are prepared adequately for their move to Year 1.
- Children enjoy working in the indoor and outdoor areas that are now well resourced and inviting. They are encouraged to become involved in a range of activities and to work and play cooperatively. However, some children tend to flit between activities. Teaching staff are supporting their children's concentration and social interaction by making suggestions and asking them questions as they work and play alongside them.
- The support that Reception staff have received from the assistant headteacher and other local schools has led to recent improvements in the teaching of letters and sounds. Children try hard to say and write letters correctly and show delight when they correctly spell and read simple words. The way that staff share books with children is promoting an enjoyment of reading and is helping to develop children's early reading skills. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to support children as they play and learn together.
- Children are confident and feel safe. They are well cared for and develop good relationships with each other and adults. Routines have been established and most children respond well to the signal to stop what they are doing or to tidy away resources, for example. However, not all children behave well during focused activities. Some shout out or do not focus on what their teacher is saying and learning time is lost. Recent training is helping Reception staff develop techniques to manage these situations.

School details

Unique reference number	109252
Local authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	10008336

This inspection 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	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Harper
Headteacher	Andrew Moore-Stow
Telephone number	0117 3772165
Website	www.st-piusx.bristol.sch.uk
Email address	stp USP@bristol-schools.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 February 2014

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The school has had a number of interim headteachers since the last inspection in 2014. The current interim headteacher has been in post for five months. An assistant headteacher has been in post for seven months.
- A number of new governors have been recently appointed, including a new chair of governors and vice-chair of governors.
- A national leader of education (NLE) from Ashton Gate Primary School in Bristol is providing support to the school working with the assistant headteacher to develop her leadership skills with a particular focus on improving teaching, learning and assessment.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is just above average.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need or an education, health and care plan is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above average.
- The proportion of boys and girls varies significantly in some year groups, as does the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 6.
- The school operates a breakfast club each morning during term time.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in nine lessons or parts of lessons. All classes were observed at least once. Over half of the observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher or assistant headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and assistant headteacher, governors including the chair of governors, staff with leadership responsibilities, the national leader of education supporting the school and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector talked to pupils in lessons and to those elected onto the school council. The inspector looked at work in pupils' books and displays around the school, and listened to some pupils read.
- The views of the 17 responses to the staff questionnaire provided by Ofsted were taken into account.
- The inspector visited the breakfast club. The views of parents spoken to at the beginning of the day and by telephone were considered, together with those of the four parents who completed the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- A range of documentation was reviewed, including information on pupils' progress and attainment, the school's self-evaluation and development plans, and information and policies relating to the safeguarding of pupils, including those linked to attendance.

Inspection team

Alison Cogher, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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