

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Blue Lane East, Walsall, West Midlands WS2 8HN

Inspection dates

18–19 October 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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- St Patrick's is an improving school. Academic standards have risen over the past two years. The recently appointed executive headteacher has improved the school further.
- Senior leaders and governors are committed to the school. They are passionate about improving pupils' outcomes. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.
- Pupils are safe and feel safe in school and parents agree.
- Boys and girls, including those who are disadvantaged, currently make good progress in all year groups. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress from their different starting points.
- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy their lessons. Their attendance is above the national average for primary schools.
- Pupils behave well. They understand how to conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils write well. They apply their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills accurately in their writing in different subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils develop a clear sense of tolerance and respect, which prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- Staff in the early years are skilled in addressing children's early language needs. This helps children take part in a range of activities and achieve well.
- Pupils develop good early reading skills, because the teaching of phonics is effective. Pupils' understanding of what they are reading is less well developed in some classes.
- The school does not have a broad range of books available for pupils to explore subjects in more depth. Leaders have plans to purchase more books in the very near future.
- The most able pupils are capable of more challenging work than they are sometimes given, for example when solving mathematical problems.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching to enhance further pupils' strong progress in each year group by:
 - teaching reading comprehension skills more frequently
 - providing more opportunities for the most able pupils to apply their mathematical understanding and demonstrate their reasoning in problem-solving.
- Broaden the range of books available for pupils to enable them to investigate and research topics for themselves.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- St Patrick's has a new senior leadership team. The executive headteacher has created a positive team approach to school improvement. She has made it clear to staff how their work contributes to overall school improvement. Staff feel valued and they know the part they play as they strive for further improvement.
- The executive headteacher and the two acting deputy headteachers work well together. They have ensured that teaching has continued to improve. The performance of teachers is well managed. Teachers value the support they are given. They appreciate the training opportunities they have, both working with colleagues in the school and attending sessions facilitated by the local authority and in schools they are linked with.
- Leaders have introduced approaches that are designed to encourage pupils to attend regularly. They have clearly communicated their expectations of pupils' behaviour and attendance. Pupils are rewarded if they meet such demands. As a result, behaviour and attendance continue to improve.
- The local authority works well with the school. The local authority's representative knows the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve further. She has supported the development of subject leaders who are now better informed as they carry out their monitoring work. The diocese is currently exploring ways to see how best it can support the school in the future.
- School values are displayed around the school and pupils refer to these when talking about their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They understand the importance of tolerance and respect. Pupils talk about how their teachers help them recognise and value diversity. They display no discrimination in their interactions with classmates and adults. Leaders make sure that pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed through the school curriculum. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Senior leaders have a clear rationale for the expenditure of the pupil premium funding. There is a clear focus on teaching, with funding used to provide teachers and teaching assistants with more time to work with this group of pupils. This approach enabled disadvantaged pupils to make better progress last year than previously. This year they are making similar rates of progress to other pupils.
- Leaders have used their primary school sport funding successfully. They recognised the need to support teachers in their teaching of physical education, most notably gymnastics. Sports coaches worked with teachers in planning, delivering and evaluating lessons. As a result, teachers are now more confident and competent in their teaching. Pupils use their newly acquired skills particularly well when developing gymnastic sequences. Pupils talked about their enjoyment of physical education lessons. The coaches also provide a wider range of sporting opportunities for pupils after school.
- Subject leaders use well-judged action plans to help them monitor and evaluate how well pupils progress in their subjects. Evidence in science and topic work shows that pupils are generally applying their writing and numeracy skills accurately in a range of

subjects.

- The leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. The special educational needs coordinator ensures that assessments of pupils' needs are accurate and that subsequent planning and teaching are effective in addressing the needs of individual pupils. The coordinator is creative in timetabling sessions so there is minimum time lost in other lessons and in enabling teachers and teaching assistants with specific skills to lead the sessions.
- Leaders have implemented a curriculum which motivates and engages pupils. Pupils talk about their enjoyment in lessons. Subjects are covered with suitable breadth. However, there is a limited range of books to enrich the curriculum, inspire pupils' interest or help them to research topics for themselves. Senior leaders are aware of this and have plans to purchase a broader range of books.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective.
- Recent changes to the governing body include the appointment of a new chair of governors and other members. These recent appointments have strengthened governance as they bring educational experience and knowledge. The chair of governors is clear in what the governing body wants the school to achieve.
- A review of the minutes of governors' meetings and discussion with governors show that statutory duties are met. These include those duties relating to safeguarding. The chair of governors has a clear strategic plan which shows how governors will be more robust in holding the school to account.
- Despite recent changes in membership, the governing body has a clear understanding of the school's relative strengths and weaknesses. They make good use of pupils' progress information to help them evaluate and challenge the effectiveness of teaching on learning.
- Governors acknowledge how the school has improved since the last inspection. They are now committed to ensuring that the school improves further. This includes working with senior leaders to ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of whole school priorities.
- Governors know the nature of the local community well. They use this information to check that staff have high expectations of pupils, no matter what barriers they might face. This includes for those pupils learning English as an additional language.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Parents acknowledge recent improvements made by school leaders. These include making the car park safer for their children as they enter and leave the school. They also recognise how staff care for their children, with parents saying that staff always look out for their children during the school day.
- Pupils are able to describe how the school keeps them safe. For example, pupils use knowledge gained from specific teaching to know what to do in order to stay safe when online. The school's website contains useful information about e-safety and other

safeguarding subjects for parents and pupils.

- Senior leaders and governors ensure that all staff are kept up to date with safeguarding aspects, by facilitating timely training sessions. Staff are confident in talking through what they do if they become concerned about a pupil. Staff fully understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers know what they are expected to do and how they can improve their teaching practice. Senior leaders make such expectations clear and check that teachers respond appropriately, by regularly visiting lessons and looking at pupils' work. Newly appointed and newly qualified teachers are supported well. They appreciate the support they receive from a variety of colleagues, stating that they are confident to seek and gain advice whenever they need to do so.
- Since the last inspection, and most notably through the last academic year, teaching has improved. This has led to pupils in all year groups making better rates of progress than previously.
- Teachers and teaching assistants demonstrate secure subject knowledge in their work with pupils. They use this knowledge, together with their understanding of pupils' learning needs, to plan and deliver effective lessons.
- In key stages 1 and 2, pupils understand what they are expected to do and step up to meet these expectations well. This results in orderly classrooms in which pupils feel secure in their learning. They write neatly and present their work well in their books.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils benefit from effective teaching and support. As a result, they make good progress. Teachers and teaching assistants know what the pupils need to do to improve and design activities which help pupils achieve well.
- Pupils write well. They are taught specific grammar and punctuation skills which they apply in their writing in different subjects. Teachers support pupils in using these skills accurately, by making sure pupils have time to read through their own and their classmates' writing and to make changes where appropriate.
- The most able readers and writers are taught well. Teachers and teaching assistants question pupils effectively. They respond to pupils' answers by asking more probing questions which make pupils think hard about their initial responses. As a result, pupils develop a deeper understanding of the topics they are learning about.
- Pupils are keen to gain recognition for their achievements. They can show this through teachers' and parents' comments in their planners. Achievements that are recognised include the completion and submission of homework. As a result, pupils' homework completion rates have improved this year.
- The teaching of early reading skills is effective. Phonics is taught well in early years and Year 1. As a result, pupils develop fluency in their reading. Sometimes, older pupils lack confidence in answering questions about their understanding of what they are reading. This skill is not consistently developed and practised in some key stage 2 classes.

- Pupils demonstrate good understanding of calculation skills in mathematics. This is because effective teaching enables pupils to consolidate such knowledge. However, some of the challenges for the most able mathematicians do not require them to demonstrate or explain their reasoning in how they solve these problems.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils respect and value each other's differences. They listen carefully and consider various opinions about topics being discussed. They reflect on ideas and how actions can both help or hurt others.
- Pupils' physical and emotional well-being is promoted effectively through different subjects. For example, in physical education, pupils learn how healthy eating and regular exercise enables them to enjoy different activities, such as gymnastics.
- Positive relationships between staff and parents begin in the early years. This communication helps staff to develop a good understanding of issues affecting pupils' welfare. They use this knowledge to identify potential future problems and take appropriate preventative actions.
- Pupils say that they talk with different members of staff if and when they are worried. They find this reassuring, as issues are resolved quickly as a result of this communication.
- Bullying is very rare. Pupils are empathetic. They look out for one another both in lessons and at breaktimes. Staff are vigilant in their day-to-day work, putting into practice what they have learned from their safeguarding training. They know what discrimination looks like and intervene with pupils if they identify any potential signs of discrimination. Surveys of pupils, parents and staff show that they feel pupils are kept very safe at St. Patrick's.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils understand what the school does to help them conduct themselves well in classrooms and around school.
- Pupils attend school regularly. So far this academic year, pupils' overall attendance has continued the trend of improvement seen in recent years. Staff work well with external agencies, including educational welfare officers, to support parents in getting their children to school regularly and on time.
- Parents, staff and pupils recognise improvements in behaviour since the appointment of the executive headteacher. They say that improvements are due to clear expectations set by senior leaders. These expectations are enforced by staff, with pupils adhering to them well.
- Typically, pupils display positive attitudes to learning in their lessons. Disruption in lessons is rare because pupils enjoy learning about the topics being taught.

- Leaders are aware that exclusion rates have been too high in recent years. Pupils in danger of exclusion are now supported effectively in school. Specific support for these pupils is implemented as soon as issues have been identified. As a result, the number of inappropriate behaviour incidents has reduced.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Since the previous inspection, pupils' outcomes have improved. In 2015 and 2016 pupils made good progress, especially in writing. They attained well and, as a result, were well prepared for their move into secondary education.
- Pupils in the school, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make the strongest progress in writing. Pupils practise grammar and punctuation skills in a range of subjects, which helps them embed these skills. Pupils convey their written ideas with coherence and clarity in different subjects.
- In recent years, pupils in key stage 1 have made good progress in reading. Their early language needs are addressed well in the early years. The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been above the national figures for the past three years.
- Pupils are now making better progress in mathematics. The majority of pupils are presented with work which is appropriately challenging. As a result, they consolidate mathematical skills and use these well when solving problems.
- When compared with the attainment of other pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils attained better results in reading, writing and mathematics in 2015 than in 2014. This group attained the best results in writing. Last year, disadvantaged pupils, including those with high prior attainment, made similar rates of progress to their classmates in each year group.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. These pupils are supported well, both in sessions with their classmates and when working in smaller groups or individually. Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that pupils' specific needs are addressed.
- Pupils are making better progress in their reading fluency this year than in previous years. Staff ensure that pupils can select books that help them consolidate words they already know, and challenge them with more difficult vocabulary. Staff in the early years and in key stage 1 are skilled in assessing how well pupils use their phonic skills to read words accurately.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years leaders have developed effective strategies to identify children's skills when they enter either the Nursery or the Reception class. Leaders and staff listen to parents, who tell them about what children can do before coming to school. Staff use this information to plan and deliver activities which speedily help children develop from their different starting points.

- Many children enter the early years with skills that are lower than typically expected for their age in most areas of learning, most notably communication and language. These early language needs are addressed quickly by staff. Staff make sure that children have frequent opportunities to talk and to develop an initial vocabulary.
- Children make good progress through both the Nursery and Reception classes. The proportion of children attaining a good level of development has improved over the past three years. In 2016, a similar proportion to the national average achieved this level. As a result, the children were well prepared for their move into Year 1.
- Leaders use funding for specific groups of pupils well in the early years. Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Staff are quick to identify these needs and work with external agencies, including those who specialise in speech and language, to agree the best ways to teach the children. Disadvantaged children also make good progress. Staff know who these children are and make sure that they monitor their progress frequently. Changes are made if progress is identified as being insufficient.
- Teaching is good. Teachers and teaching assistants use their secure understanding of how young children learn to set up imaginative and purposeful learning areas. Children benefit from effective engagement with adults. For example, a group of able children developed a good understanding of seeds and plant growth through answering well-phrased questions from a teaching assistant.
- When children arrive in the early years, most understand what is expected of them and behave appropriately. A minority of children find the transition into school more challenging. Over time, their behaviour improves as they realise the importance of this.
- Parents continue to work in partnership with staff through the early years. Staff make it clear to parents that their children's welfare is central to the work that they do. This helps to establish a trust between the school and the home and, in turn, parents are keen to work with staff to address any concerns that may arise.

School details

Unique reference number	104233
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10012393

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Quinn
Executive headteacher	Jean Richmond
Telephone number	01922 720063
Website	www.st-patricks.walsall.sch.uk
Email address	postbox@st-patricks.walsall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 July 2014

Information about this school

- An executive headteacher oversees the work at St Patrick's and St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic primary schools.
- The executive headteacher was appointed in May 2016. The deputy headteacher is currently on maternity leave. There are two acting deputy headteachers seconded to St. Patrick's from other local schools.
- The chair of the governing body was appointed at the start of this academic year.
- There are two newly qualified teachers. A total of four new teachers joined the school this September.
- St Patrick's is similar to the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years are taught in one part-time Nursery class and in one full-time Reception class. All other year groups have one class.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average.

- Approximately 40% of the pupils are White British. The other pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Approximately one third of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes and visited small group intervention sessions. They visited 13 lessons, four of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff and the chair of the governing body and other governors.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading and listened to both higher- and lower-ability pupils read.
- Inspectors examined work in pupils' books.
- The school's child protection and safeguarding procedures were scrutinised.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including school improvement plans and minutes from meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the 72 replies to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire and spoke with parents. Inspectors also looked at surveys completed by pupils and staff.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's website.

Inspection team

Jeremy Bird, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Diane Pye

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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