

St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Adams Hill, Bartley Green, Birmingham, West Midlands B32 3QD

Inspection dates

10–11 January 2017

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have been slow to address some of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. They have not secured the consistently good teaching required for pupils to achieve well.
- Leaders' plans and their evaluations of the school's progress are not specific enough. This makes it hard for governors and others to judge how well the school is improving.
- The school has not prioritised the progress of the most able pupils. Some of the work set for these pupils does not challenge them to do their best.
- In 2015 and 2016, pupils left key stage 2 having made weak progress in English and mathematics. Until recently, the progress of current pupils across the school has been too slow.
- In 2016, very few pupils attained the highest standards by the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. The legacy of weaker progress earlier in their school career means that many able pupils still have catching up to do if they are to fulfil their potential by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching in mathematics rarely requires pupils to devise and explain their own strategies to solve problems.

The school has the following strengths

- The quality of teaching, especially the teaching of reading, has begun to improve more rapidly, and many pupils currently in the school are now making strong progress.
- The teaching of phonics is very effective. In recent years, the proportion of Year 1 pupils who attained the expected standard in the phonics screening check has been above the national average.
- Teaching assistants make a very strong contribution to pupils' learning.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel safe and behave well, both in class and at social times. Attendance is above the national average.
- Leaders plan learning in the early years well so that it builds carefully on children's abilities when they enter the school.
- Although governors have been slow to hold leaders to account, recent appointments have greatly strengthened the governing body.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers set work, including homework, for the most able pupils which provides a consistently high level of challenge and enables them to make strong progress
 - making sure that pupils are given frequent opportunities to develop their abilities to reason mathematically.
- Increase the proportion of pupils attaining a high standard or working at greater depth at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 by:
 - identifying all those with the potential to do so and checking precisely on their progress
 - ensuring that all teachers understand fully how to teach topics to a greater depth.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that all improvement plans provide sufficiently detailed information for leaders and governors to check accurately on the school's progress
 - providing for governors and other stakeholders a self-evaluation which sharply identifies the school's current strengths and weaknesses.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement because senior leaders have not been able to secure consistently good teaching. As a result, standards of achievement have only recently begun to rise significantly. In large part, this reflects past difficulties in recruiting good teachers, but progress towards addressing some of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection has been sluggish.
- Leaders' written evaluation of the school's progress is vague, and does not identify precisely enough for governors and for others with an interest in the school how quickly the school is improving. Improvement plans are more specific, but lack the detail which would enable leaders and governors to make accurate judgements at any particular point in time. Leaders' judgements made during the inspection were basically accurate but lacking in sharpness.
- The school has paid too little attention to the progress of the most able pupils. Leaders have not ensured that all teachers are fully aware of how to teach topics in greater depth. Although some of the most able pupils benefit from specific projects such as weekly mathematics lessons at a local secondary school, there is no overall strategy to boost their achievement, and no recognition of the need to include those pupils whose previous underachievement may mask their high academic potential.
- Leaders have established clear procedures for recording pupils' progress every half term. Teachers use this information to plan work which is based on the skills and understanding pupils have already achieved. Teachers supplement their assessments by setting short standardised tests. They regularly check the accuracy of their judgements with each other, and with those of teachers in other local schools.
- Leaders use the information from assessments and from their scrutiny of pupils' work to identify pupils who need to catch up. Those who lead provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are skilled at identifying the extra help that some pupils require, and enlisting the support of other agencies when appropriate.
- Pupils' learning includes a good balance of different subjects from the national curriculum, and topics often combine effectively knowledge and understanding from different areas. The curriculum is enriched by visits to places of interest and through extra-curricular opportunities in sport and the creative arts.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development most effectively through lessons, assemblies and tutor time. Pupils value the opportunity to take up positions of responsibility and through the school council to contribute to the running of the school. Under supervision, pupils run clubs for younger children and regularly raise money for charity. In discussion with inspectors, pupils showed that they are very respectful of other cultures and traditions, and well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupil premium expenditure has been effective in addressing the social and mental health difficulties which hampered some disadvantaged pupils' access to learning, but in the last academic year had insufficient impact in making up for weaknesses in the

school's provision. Leaders have allocated this year's grant more carefully and improved their checks on disadvantaged pupils' progress, and as a result, disadvantaged pupils are beginning to catch up with other pupils nationally.

- Leaders spend the physical education and sport premium effectively to increase participation in competitive sport and provide staff training. Daily skipping promotes pupils' physical fitness and encourages pupils to develop resilience.
- Leaders set high expectations for pupils' conduct and for standards of uniform. They hold teachers to account for their pupils' progress. Staff, including those teachers at an early stage of their careers, report that the training and support they are offered are proving helpful in developing their skills. Leaders have provided highly effective training for teaching assistants to develop their expertise in specific roles.
- Staff and governors value the guidance and opportunities for training provided by 'The Quad', a small group of local Catholic primary schools. Inspection evidence confirmed that this arrangement has made a significant positive impact on the school, for example by reviewing the teaching of reading. Other support for the school has been less effective.

Governance of the school

- Governance is now effective.
- Governors have acted on the review of governance arising from the last inspection. They have received training in how to interpret information about pupils' performance. They visit the school regularly and know the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors ensure that they play a full and effective part in keeping pupils safe. They ensure that the right procedures are used when new staff are appointed and that the necessary checks are made on all who come into contact with children. They make sure that the site is safe. Governors ensure that the school works within its budget and check on the expenditure of the additional money provided for particular pupils.
- Recent appointments have strengthened the governing body considerably. New governors' professional knowledge and skills greatly strengthen the governing body's ability to hold leaders to account. Their recruitment accelerates and consolidates the improvements sought at the last inspection.
- Governors involve an independent adviser in the management of the headteacher's performance so that decisions about her role are fully considered. They give due consideration to the headteacher's recommendations on the pay and performance of other staff.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's arrangements meet all statutory requirements and all policies and procedures are up to date. Leaders ensure that all staff, including those who have arrived very recently, are familiar with the school's child protection guidance.
- Inspectors found that staff keep detailed, secure records. They are quick to contact parents when they identify circumstances which may make pupils potentially vulnerable, and then work with them effectively. When the need arises, they make rapid contact with other agencies that protect children. When staff do not receive an adequate response they persist until they know that pupils are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time, while improving, remains inconsistent. Inspectors saw much strong classroom practice, but more needs to be done to stretch the most able and to refine the teaching of mathematics.
- Teachers are aware of the importance of setting work that challenges the most able pupils to achieve their best. Leaders acknowledged, however, that many still lack confidence in how to provide those tasks that would allow pupils to understand topics in greater depth. Both in the learning observed during the inspection and in the work seen in pupils' books, the most able completed much of the same work as pupils of lesser ability. As a result, they had little time to add to their existing understanding, and their progress was slowed.
- Teaching in mathematics has been heavily weighted towards the learning of skills, although pupils do have some opportunity to apply those skills in mathematics lessons and in subjects such as science and geography. Pupils' workbooks showed that they rarely have the opportunity to reason mathematically, although inspectors observed in lessons that they enjoyed the opportunity to do so.
- The quality of teachers' questioning is variable. Teachers often question pupils effectively to judge whether they have understood the key ideas in the lesson so that the teachers know whether to move on or to recap. Teaching assistants are noticeably skilful at rephrasing and breaking down questions so that less-able pupils understand. However, questioning is rarely used to challenge the understanding of the most able pupils and so extend their thinking.
- Starting in the early years, adults develop pupils' phonic knowledge well because they introduce letters and sounds in a structured sequence and take careful account of each pupil's progress. Inspection evidence showed that teachers have sometimes developed other reading skills less effectively, but the teaching of reading is improving rapidly, and older pupils explained to inspectors in detail how different classroom activities developed their reading skills.
- Pupils who spoke with the inspectors enjoy reading and most read at home. Weaker readers know how to use their phonic knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words and value the support which staff provide. The most able readers can read fluently and with good expression. They are able to provide examples from the text to justify their views and explore their personal preferences.
- Inspection evidence showed that teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to develop vocabulary and grammar as they craft a piece of writing, and many pupils are now making strong progress as a result. Some younger pupils nevertheless lack the confidence and perseverance to write as much as they should.
- The learning of all pupils benefits from well-established classroom routines and strong relationships between staff and pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure, they use subject-specific vocabulary accurately, and ensure that pupils do the same. Pupils know what they need to do to improve and are encouraged to learn from their mistakes. A 'gap week' at the end of each half term gives teachers and pupils the opportunity to address areas where pupils' understanding is not secure.

- Teachers set homework regularly, some of which can be completed online. Pupils enjoy the variety of homework tasks, but many told inspectors it was often too easy.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel entirely safe in school, and younger pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they never felt that older pupils' behaviour was too boisterous. Pupils report that bullying is very rare and that teachers resolve any problems as soon as they arise. There is always an adult to turn to if they feel unhappy.
- The school teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe in several respects. They learn about the importance of road safety and responsible use of the internet. The school makes every effort to ensure that all pupils can swim before they leave Year 6.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are given frequent opportunities to reflect on moral, social and educational values. During the inspection teachers focused on resilience and self-confidence, both in classroom discussion and through the daily two minute skipping challenge.
- Year 6 pupils are confident that the school is preparing them well for the move to secondary school. They explain how teachers have helped them to become more independent. Pupils place particular value on the Year 6 residential trip, and how working with those who were not their close friends taught them to understand others.
- Pupils are polite and friendly, and treat visitors with courtesy. They believe that the school is improving. They appreciate the opportunity to contribute to its success, for example by taking up positions of responsibility or suggesting their own developments.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy learning and are willing to work hard. In the classroom, pupils follow staff instructions quickly and settle to their work without fuss. They take an unfailing pride in their books, and present their work neatly even when this requires considerable effort. Pupils collaborate with each other very well, and older pupils explained to the inspectors that this resulted from teachers grouping pupils carefully so that they became familiar with working with others.
- Pupils' conduct on the corridors and in the dining hall is orderly and responsible. They play happily in the playground, in part because a good range of play equipment is readily available.
- Leaders keep detailed records of behavioural incidents and check carefully to see whether these reflect any trends that require attention. Since the last inspection, they have excluded a small number of pupils for a fixed term, and inspection evidence showed that the behaviour of these pupils is well managed.
- The school celebrates high attendance and provides a series of rewards for those who very rarely miss a day in school. Staff chase up pupils' absence relentlessly, and work

intensively with the families of those pupils whose attendance begins to dip. As a result, attendance overall and that of vulnerable groups of pupils is above the national average.

- Older pupils reported that just occasionally the classroom becomes noisy, although this was not borne out by inspection evidence. Some younger pupils lack a little stamina and lose some focus when not under direct supervision.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes require improvement because until recently their progress across the school was no better than that expected of pupils nationally. Therefore pupils were not catching up for weaker progress made when they were in the younger years. Inspection evidence showed that the most able pupils are only now beginning to make the more rapid progress required to achieve their academic potential.
- In 2016, Year 6 pupils left the school having made progress across key stage 2 which was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress in reading was particularly low, but the school's detailed analysis shows that, in part, the results reflected pupils' inexperience in test conditions. The proportion of pupils who completed key stage 1 or key stage 2 having attained at greater depth or at a higher standard was very small, reflecting the particularly weak past progress of the most able pupils.
- Since the last inspection, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been above the national average. This reflects the effective teaching of phonics in the younger years.
- Information supplied by the school and confirmed by inspection evidence shows that across the school, pupils are making much stronger progress, and that the proportion attaining the standards expected of their age is now approaching the national average. Standards in Year 6 currently are appreciably higher than those attained by those who left the school in 2016. This reflects the improving quality of teaching and more-effective identification and support for those at risk of falling behind.
- Disadvantaged pupils' achievement has been no better than that of other pupils in the school. Although the expenditure of the pupil premium grant in 2015/16 ensured that disadvantaged pupils had the social skills and confidence to be ready to learn, it is only this academic year that the combination of better class teaching and more effective academic support has led to a secure improvement in their progress. The difference between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally is therefore beginning to diminish.
- The progress of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, is improving, but inspection evidence shows that this is not yet secure. This is because teachers sometimes set work which provides limited challenge and does not encourage the most able pupils to think at greater depth. There is therefore a great deal of work to do to ensure that all those with the potential to attain the highest levels do so by the time they leave the school.
- Leaders are increasingly effective at identifying the right provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, evaluating its impact, and amending

provision if appropriate. Teaching assistants have been well trained to provide specialist support, both in pupils' normal classrooms and in leading small groups. As a result, the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is often strong.

- The school's emphasis on giving pupils access to a wide range of subjects and developing their confidence and independence helps to prepare them for secondary school. However, the current improvements in achievement need to be sustained to ensure that pupils leave school with all the essential skills required for a smooth transition.

Early years provision

Good

- The majority of children start Reception with skills and abilities which are typical of their age, but a minority have less well developed skills, particularly in the areas of communication and language, and knowledge of the world. In response, leaders effectively prioritise speaking and listening in the initial weeks to build children's understanding of sentence structure and vocabulary.
- Information supplied by the school and confirmed by inspection evidence shows that almost all children make strong progress and a high proportion of those who enter the school with weaker skills start to catch up. Recent information indicates that the proportion of children who left Reception in 2016 having attained a good level of development was a little above the national average.
- Teachers assess frequently what children can do and use these judgements to plan activities which represent the appropriate next steps for each individual. They check their judgements every half term with staff from other local schools.
- Teaching in the early years is consistently good. Staff often use questioning very effectively to extend children's understanding. They ensure that children gain a rich experience of all seven areas of learning. From the outset, they pay particular attention to developing children's phonic knowledge and awareness of number. Opportunities to read, write and use numbers are imaginatively combined with other learning. Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy, together with children's evident self-confidence, make them well prepared to embark on key stage 1.
- The school has rigorous procedures to keep children safe and promote their welfare. The setting, including the outdoor area, is attractive and well planned, with vibrant and relevant displays to reinforce children's learning.
- Staff set high expectations for children's behaviour and consistently reinforce clear routines and boundaries. As a result, children behave well, following instructions promptly and treating both adults and other children with respect. They collaborate with each other conspicuously well and readily share resources.
- Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the setting well and act to improve the provision. For example, they have responded to outcomes in 2016 by promoting expressive art and design, including the installation of a replica building site in the outdoor area. Leaders are also developing reading strategies and emphasising problem solving in mathematics. Leaders make sure that all staff communicate effectively and work together as a team.

- Leaders plan the admission of children to the provision very thoroughly. Staff visit the homes of children joining Reception and liaise effectively with the children's nursery settings. Children visit the school for three transition days and staff arranged a well-attended meeting for new parents to explain how the school teaches reading.
- Although leaders are aware of the importance of providing activities that stretch the most able children, the teaching of this group remains inconsistent. Questioning sometimes fails to extend their understanding and a larger number of children would benefit from the more advanced learning currently offered to a small group.

School details

Unique reference number	103469
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10025169

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gary Buckby
Headteacher	Alison Pickin
Telephone number	0121 464 6921
Website	www.stpeterc.bham.sch.uk
Email address	enquiry@stpeterc.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 January 2015

Information about this school

- St Peter’s Catholic Primary School is a smaller than average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The majority of pupils are White British, and smaller proportions are drawn from a large number of different ethnic groups.
- The school has experienced quite a high turnover of staff since the last inspection, and two teachers have joined the school this academic year.
- The school does not meet the government’s current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6.

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about governors' committees on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 12 lessons and one learning walk. Three lessons were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed small-group teaching, after-school hockey training and pupils' conduct at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, other leaders and class teachers. The lead inspector met with governors and with a group comprising two representatives of the local authority and two representatives of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Birmingham.
- Two groups of pupils, chosen at random, met with inspectors. Inspectors spoke with a large number of pupils informally. One inspector listened to pupils read from Years 3, 4 and 6.
- The inspectors looked at many workbooks in their visits to classrooms and, sometimes alongside senior leaders, scrutinised in depth all the work produced by some pupils this academic year. They considered a wide range of information about pupils' current and recent performance.
- The inspectors looked at a wide variety of documents, both electronically and on paper. These included development plans and their evaluations; policies; the minutes of governors' meetings and an external review of governance; and information provided for parents, including reports on pupils' progress. Inspectors scrutinised in detail records showing how the school supports vulnerable pupils.
- The inspection team took account of the 17 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and the school's own recent survey of parental opinion. Inspectors spoke with parents delivering their children to school on the second day of the inspection and to one parent by telephone. The inspectors also considered 116 responses to the pupil questionnaire, and 16 responses to the questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sian Williams	Ofsted Inspector

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