

St Aidan's Catholic Primary Academy

Benton Road, Ilford, Essex IG1 4AS

Inspection dates

21–22 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Governors and leaders have not created a culture of vigilance where pupils' safety and welfare is of paramount importance.
- Leaders are not aware of all the types of checks that must be carried out to ensure that staff are suitable to work with pupils. Procedures for recruiting staff are haphazard and not compliant with statutory requirements.
- Staff are not sure who the most vulnerable pupils in the school are, including those children who are looked after.
- Leaders have not ensured that all staff are clear about their responsibilities to safeguard pupils' safety and welfare, including those set out in the latest statutory requirements.
- Governors do not hold senior leaders to account effectively. They do not ask searching questions in relation to pupils' progress.
- Attendance is below the national average and has declined from the previous year.
- Teaching is inconsistent across all year groups and subjects. As a result, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders have been over-generous in their self-evaluation of the school's performance and have not identified the correct actions that will bring about rapid improvement.
- The pupil premium funding is not used wisely to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Children's safety in the early years is compromised because safeguarding arrangements are ineffective.
- The quality of teaching reading is inconsistent at key stage 2.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are respectful, polite and friendly. Pupils from diverse backgrounds learn happily together.
- Pupils are well behaved and keen learners. Key stage 1 pupils are confident readers and use their phonics knowledge well to read unknown words.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. British values are promoted well through the curriculum. Consequently, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that as a matter of urgency governors and leaders make pupils' safety a top priority by:
 - making sure that all staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities to safeguard pupils
 - taking immediate action to ensure that all the appropriate checks are completed for all staff and governors in the school
 - making sure that all the documents in the safer recruitment files meet statutory requirements
 - putting into place personal education plans for children who are looked after
 - ensuring that governors receive up-to-date training in preventing radicalisation and extremism.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders accurately assess the school's performance and prioritise actions to secure rapid improvement
 - making sure that the school's plans for improvement focus tightly on the progress of all groups of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils
 - securing accuracy in the assessments of pupils' learning to inform teaching in all year groups
 - making sure that teaching is consistently good or better across all year groups and in all subjects, including the early years
 - ensuring that leaders work effectively with external agencies, where appropriate, to support the most vulnerable pupils in the school.
- Ensure that governors provide effective challenge and support to leaders by holding them to account for their statutory responsibilities related to safeguarding, the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes, including those of disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve attendance rates for all pupils, particularly those eligible for free school meals, by analysing information regularly and putting into place effective actions to enable them to attend more regularly.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - teachers plan activities that promote better progress, and raise their expectations

of what pupils can do and achieve

- teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical reasoning skills through problem solving
 - reading is taught consistently across key stage 2 to develop pupils' inference and deduction skills.
- Immediately improve the effectiveness of the early years provision, by ensuring that:
- children have a safe learning environment to learn and play and are well supervised when they move from one learning activity to another
 - recruitment checks confirm that all adults are suitable to work with children
 - adults effectively observe, plan and assess children's learning and development to ensure that they make rapid progress.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

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 may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Safeguarding arrangements are not fit for purpose. Leaders and governors have not created a culture whereby pupils' safety is given utmost priority. As a result, pupils' welfare is potentially at risk.
- Leaders are not following the latest legislation for the appointment of staff. They have a limited understanding of the types of checks that need to take place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. School records show that procedures for staff recruitment are inconsistent. Inspectors found that leaders do not follow their own systems for recruiting staff. As a result, leaders have appointed some staff without carrying out all the necessary checks.
- Leaders are unclear about which children at the school are looked after. They are unaware of the needs of these pupils and what additional support they need so that they learn and achieve well.
- Staff receive training on different aspects of safeguarding such as female genital mutilation and the 'Prevent' duty. However, leaders have not carried out sufficient checks on whether staff are clear about all their responsibilities as set out in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016'. While some staff report that they have read this document, they were unsure about what was in it. Others reported that they have not read it at all.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is over-generous and the school's plans for improvement lack precision. Leaders' priorities are not fully in line with the school's most recent performance in the 2016 national assessments, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. This does not support swift improvement.
- The pupil premium funding is not used effectively to ensure that the differences are diminishing between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally. In 2016, disadvantaged pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics was well below that of others nationally.
- The sports funding is used well. The school has deployed a specialist physical education (PE) teacher and sports adviser to improve the quality of teaching and learning in PE. Additionally, the funding is used to introduce competitive sports and improve the provision of sporting clubs.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. The plan indicates that a wide range of subjects and skills are taught. Fundamental British values have been woven well through topics and the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils learn about crime and punishment through the ages and reflect on the rule of law that is current in modern Britain. Learning is enriched through trips and focus weeks such as refugee week, which is linked to the topics being studied.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Displays in classrooms indicate that pupils learn to respect and tolerate cultural diversity. For example, one pupil wrote: 'I accept the belief of others. Not everyone has the same faith and we have a lot to learn from each other.'

- Leaders strongly promote equality of opportunity and there is a real sense of diversity throughout the school. This is evident in displays around the school. For example, the Year 1 'special people' display celebrates a range of people's jobs and how they help the community. This promotes equality well, as girls are pictured in roles such as firefighters and builders.

Governance of the school

- Governors are not fulfilling their statutory duties effectively enough. They do not ensure that the school's safeguarding procedures are rigorous and fit for purpose, and meet the Secretary of State's latest guidance.
- Governors regularly visit the school. They audit the single central record of recruitment checks on a termly basis. However, governors are not fully aware of the types of checks that need to be undertaken prior to staff appointments. As a result, all staff are not fully checked to ensure that they are suitable and safe to work with children.
- Governors do not sufficiently challenge and hold senior leaders to account for pupils' progress, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. The school's single central record of statutory pre-employment checks for staff does not meet requirements. At the time of the inspection, essential information was missing. For example, the record did not contain any information on whether overseas police checks had been carried out and, crucially, leaders did not understand that they were required to do this. There are some aspects of safeguarding that are effective. For example, staff are visible at the school gates every day to ensure that pupils enter the school safely.
- Leaders do not work effectively with external agencies to support the most vulnerable pupils in the school. For example, leaders do not use the services of other professionals to meet the needs of these pupils. Most parents feel they are kept well informed of their children's progress. They say their children are well looked after.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent across year groups and within subjects. Teaching is stronger at key stage 2 than at key stage 1 and this results in variations in pupils' progress.
- Teachers' expectations for all pupils, including the most able, are not high enough. Learning activities are, too often, not demanding enough of pupils. During visits to lessons, inspectors noted that the most able have to wait too long before they get started on work that stretches their thinking. This slows down pupils' progress.
- Mathematics is taught effectively across the school. The work in pupils' books indicates that pupils develop basic mathematics skills well such as fractions and shape, space and measure. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning skills to deepen their mathematical understanding.

- Pupils' progress in writing is inconsistent across the school. Pupils do not consistently apply their writing skills across subjects like science. They are not sufficiently challenged to write at length and to their full potential.
- Key stage 2 pupils read with confidence and fluency, and demonstrate an understanding of the text. However, they do not regularly read at school. During guided reading sessions, teachers do not effectively question pupils about their reading. This does not further develop and extend their inference skills. This slows down their progress.
- The support that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive is inconsistent. Nevertheless, in a few classes, adults work well with individual pupils to support their learning. For example, inspectors observed an adult effectively helping individual pupils to use their sounds to read words. Consequently, the progress pupils make is too variable.
- Phonics is taught effectively at key stage 1. This is because staff have a secure knowledge of phonics to teach it well. Pupils use their sounds effectively to read and spell unfamiliar words.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. Leaders have not ensured that the mandatory checks are carried out on all staff in the school, which means that they cannot be sure that staff are suitable to be employed in a school. Over time, leaders have not given pupils' safety the highest priority. For example, visitors to the school do not regularly sign the visitors' book. Leaders have not worked closely enough with external agencies to secure the support needed for the most vulnerable pupils in the school.
- Leaders do not analyse attendance information with sufficient rigour. They are unclear about how they are tracking pupils' absence and what steps they are taking to improve attendance. Leaders do not analyse the patterns of absences for different groups of pupils. In 2016, persistent absence for pupils who are eligible for free school meals was high compared to the national average. Consequently, pupils are potentially put at risk of harm and missing their learning.
- Pupils are proud of their school. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the responsibilities they are given. Examples include 'values leaders', who exemplify the school's core values and show visitors around the school. This contributes to pupils becoming confident and independent learners.
- Pupils say bullying is rare. They feel their problems are dealt with quickly and fairly. Pupils are clear where to go for support, should there be anything that concerns them.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection say their children are happy at school and staff, including the headteacher, are approachable.
- Pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of how to stay safe online. They are taught how to stay safe online through the computing curriculum.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are articulate, polite and well mannered. They are confident learners who approached inspectors to express their views about the school and their learning experiences. Pupils told inspectors they enjoy coming to school.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school, at playtimes and lunchtimes. This contributes to a calm, purposeful and orderly environment. Pupils from different backgrounds play harmoniously together. Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of belonging to the school. As one pupil said, 'St Aidan's is a family.'
- Pupils concentrate well in lessons and support each other in their learning. Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect and courtesy. For example, inspectors observed how attentively pupils listened and respected each other's views during class discussions.
- Attendance has declined and is below the national average. As a result, valuable learning time is lost and this contributes to the lack of progress of some pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Progress in reading, writing and mathematics is variable across the school. This is a result of inconsistent teaching over time. Progress across other subjects such as science is inconsistent, particularly at key stage 1. Progress is strongest in Year 5 for writing and mathematics.
- In 2016, pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 was broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics, but this masks the fact that disadvantaged pupils did not make progress at the same rate as their peers. Currently, disadvantaged pupils' progress is inconsistent across year groups and subjects.
- Last year, the progress of Year 6 pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was too low in mathematics. Presently, these pupils have made insufficient progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is the result of leaders not acting swiftly to meet their learning needs.
- Too many pupils, including the most able, are not making the progress they are capable of in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because learning activities are planned for pupils working within the expected standard in these subjects. Additionally, there is lack of challenge for the most able pupils so they do not achieve their full potential. In 2016, the proportion of pupils who achieved the higher standard in writing was below the national average in writing.
- Teachers' expectations are too low and their assessment of what pupils achieve is inaccurate. As a result, pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable.
- In 2016, the proportion of Year 1 pupils, particularly the disadvantaged, who met the expected standard in the phonics screening check was below the national average. This year, more pupils are likely to meet the expected standard in phonics. This is because teachers are now more confident in teaching phonics so they build on the good start

children make in the early years.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- Safeguarding is ineffective across the school. Leaders have not ensured that all staff are suitable to work with children. This means that children's safety in the early years is potentially at risk. Transitions between learning activities are not well supervised. This puts children at risk in terms of health and safety.
- The early years leader is new to her role. She is aware of what needs to be done to improve the quality of the early years. However, it is too early to judge if this will make a difference in children's learning and development.
- Teaching in the early years is not effective. Assessment information is not precise in terms of accurately pinpointing what children are capable of doing and what will move them to the next level. Planned learning activities do not demand enough of the children. This slows down their progress.
- In 2016, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development at the end of Reception Year was above the national average. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals who achieved a good level of development was above average. Inspectors' assessments of current children's work shows that they are not making sufficient progress expected for their age.
- The outdoor area for children is inviting and enables them to acquire a range of skills. For example, inspectors observed adults effectively modelling speaking and listening through a kitchen role play scenario. This supports children's language development effectively.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Children are developing the skills and knowledge that will help them in their reading and writing. During visits to lessons, inspectors noted how accurately adults modelled the sounds that letters make.
- There are strong relationships between adults and families. Parents are well supported to contribute to their children's learning and development. For example, parents can contribute to the children's learning journals through 'wow' cards to celebrate children's achievement. This provides good continuity for their children's learning and development. Further opportunities are made available to parents through 'stay and play' sessions.

School details

Unique reference number	140295
Local authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	10008684

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	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	445
Appropriate authority	St Aidan's Catholic Primary Academy Trust
Chair	William Whiston
Headteacher	Linda Edwards-d'Auvergne
Telephone number	020 8590 5223
Website	www.staidansacademy.org
Email address	admin.st-aidans@redbridge.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 May 2012

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website about: the school's most recent key stage 2 results; information on how to access the Department for Education's performance information; details of the physical education and sports premium for primary schools; governors' details; special educational needs information report and the school's core values.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about exclusion arrangements, the current memorandum of association, the trust's articles of association, and the trust's funding agreement charity trustees' and members' names.
- The school converted to academy status in November 2013, being known as St Aidan's Catholic Primary Academy Trust. It is a single academy trust. The school has no provision for two-year-olds.

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is broadly average.
- The vast majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds with a high proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and are receiving support is broadly average. The proportion of pupils who have education, health and care (EHC) plans is below average.
- The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school during the academic year is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for 2016. These set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- There is a breakfast club that is run by the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 19 lessons, some of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' books during visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with the chair and two other governors, teaching and support staff.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils informally during lessons, playtime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 2 and 6.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders.
- HMI met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took into account 61 responses to parent view, Ofsted's online questionnaire, a letter from one parent and 25 free-text responses. In addition, inspectors met with parents informally at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documentation including: the school's own assessment information on current pupils' progress and self-evaluation; plans for improvement records relating to behaviour and attendance; documents related to safeguarding; checks that leaders make on the quality of teaching and learning.

Inspection team

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Rani Karim	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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