

# St Paul's Catholic Primary School

Sisefield Road, Kings Norton, Birmingham, West Midlands B38 9JB

## Inspection dates

6–7 March 2018

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	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Although pupils are now making better progress, attainment at the end of key stages 1 and 2 remains below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not yet achieving as well as other pupils nationally.
- The quality of teaching and learning is not consistently good across the school. As a result, pupils' progress varies. Leaders do not check often enough to see that all teachers are making improvements to their teaching.
- Teachers do not make effective use of open-ended questions to probe and deepen pupils' thinking and understanding. They do not always check that pupils have secured the skills taught before moving on to the next stage in learning, especially in mathematics.
- Additional adults are not used effectively enough to have an impact on pupils' outcomes.
- The most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to achieve the high standards they are capable of.
- While subject leaders are starting to make a difference, they are not yet skilled enough in holding others to account to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their area of responsibility.
- Leaders focus on the right areas for improvement. However, they are not sharp enough in their action plans in setting timescales and indicating who is leading, monitoring and evaluating actions to further improve the school's outcomes.
- Pupils' editing and redrafting skills are not as well developed as they should be. Pupils do not apply the writing skills they develop in English accurately in all subjects.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders' actions have secured better outcomes for children in early years and improved phonics skills. In addition, outcomes have risen, especially in English grammar, spelling and punctuation at key stage 2.
- Teaching in early years is designed well to meet the learning needs of children. As a result, they make good progress.
- Effective systems and procedures are in place to support vulnerable pupils. Pupils are well cared for and feel safe. The school's care and support for pupils are real strengths.
- Governors visit the school regularly. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes so that:
  - more pupils achieve or exceed age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics, in line with other pupils nationally
  - groups of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, are helped to catch up with other pupils nationally.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - strengthening the role, impact and accountability of leaders at all levels to further improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress
  - checking to see that all teachers are swiftly making the necessary improvements to their practice
  - refining school improvement action plans by setting targets that are specific, time-related and measurable and by monitoring and evaluating the impact of actions more precisely
  - implementing the recommendations from the ongoing review into the use of pupil premium funds, ensuring a sharp focus on the progress that disadvantaged pupils make from their various starting points.
- Secure good-quality teaching and learning in all classes, so that pupils make the progress they are capable of by:
  - checking that pupils have secured an understanding of the skills being taught before moving on to the next stage in their learning, especially in mathematics
  - ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to edit and redraft their writing and apply their writing skills accurately in all subjects
  - making sure that effective use is made of all adults to have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes
  - using open-ended questions skilfully to probe and deepen children's thinking and understanding
  - ensuring that most-able pupils are provided with tasks that are consistently challenging.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Over time, leaders and managers have not made sure that pupils have made sufficient progress by the end of key stage 2. This is the case in reading, writing and mathematics, and includes disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils.
- The substantial changes to staffing in the school and problems with recruitment have made it difficult to maintain the quality of teaching. This has resulted in pupils underachieving. The induction process for new teachers and a recent focus on accelerating and consolidating improvements in the quality of teaching are starting to address the areas of weakness. Staff work well as a team and support each other.
- Leaders' self-evaluation helps them to focus on the right aspects for school improvement. However, the action plans do not identify people who will lead, monitor and evaluate the impact of actions, nor include deadlines and milestones. This makes it difficult to keep to timescales, effectively judge impact and hold others to account.
- Leaders are very keen and enthusiastic to make the necessary improvements in their subject areas. They lead professional development and monitor the quality of teaching. However, not enough opportunities are taken to check that teachers are making the necessary improvements swiftly enough.
- The use of the pupil premium funding has not been consistently effective, although some improvements are starting to take place. A pupil premium review was carried out very recently, so the school has not had time to act on the recommendations.
- Staff speak positively about the professional development opportunities they receive to help them improve their practice. Staff recognise the need to improve outcomes for the pupils.
- The headteacher places the needs of pupils at the heart of the school's work. Parents and carers and families value this approach and see the school as the hub of the community. Parents, staff and pupils are all proud to be part of St Paul's. Leaders and governors successfully communicate the vision, ambition and aspirations to pupils, staff and parents through expectations and values.
- Recent work with a local teaching school is proving very beneficial. Leaders have actioned all developments suggested. The impact of this work can be seen in some improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is having a positive impact on the education of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Although recently in post, she has established strong links with parents and has quickly established the individual needs of each pupil. Training for staff and an evaluation of the impact of support being provided ensure that these pupils make strong progress from their starting points.
- The curriculum is broad and interesting and designed to enhance personal development and attitudes to learning. It is tailored to provide the pupils with experiences in the context for learning. For example, pupils benefit from many visits and visitors such as to the Black Country Museum, the health education caravan and the Animal Man. The celebration of community spirit, and valuing everyone and the

ethos this creates are key strengths of the school. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There are plenty of enrichment activities and special events. The school offers plenty of clubs, such as a gardening club and a recorder group. The school council and peer mediators provide opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills and suggest further improvements.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used effectively. It has increased pupils' participation in sport. It is used to employ a sports coach and provide a range of activities that pupils enjoy. Pupils have many opportunities to take part in competitions and experience a range of sports, such as handball, gymnastics, rounders, orienteering, swimming and hockey. The coach works alongside teachers to help them improve their skills in teaching PE.
- Parents are very positive about school life and most would recommend the school to others. Typical comments from parents included: 'My child is really happy at school and enjoys learning every day, she loves her teacher and teaching assistant. She has lots of friends and enjoys learning with her peers!'

### **Governance of the school**

- The board of directors of the Lumen Christi Catholic Multi-Academy Company (MAC) has strategic overview of the school's work. The local academy committee carries out the main functions of a typical governing body and reports to the MAC. All are highly committed. The MAC provides good-quality support for the school in financial matters but also in building leadership capacity. This is helping to move the school forward.
- Governors are well informed about the life of the school, pupils' outcomes, the quality of teaching and the impact of leaders. They visit the school regularly and receive reports and presentations from leaders. The governing body has a wide set of skills and uses them well to ask challenging questions to bring about further improvements.
- Governors understand the strengths and areas for improvement. They recognise that further improvements need to be made, especially for disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors work hard to ensure that all safeguarding practices are effective. They receive regular training on safeguarding matters alongside staff. They monitor the impact of the additional funding for pupil premium, the PE and sport premium and additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and governors have put clear systems in place for safeguarding pupils. They are understood and carried out diligently by staff. Regular training supports staff in being alert to the possible warning signs of abuse that pupils may present. Staff report concerns promptly and the designated safeguarding lead acts swiftly.
- The headteacher has very high expectations of the support and welfare for pupils and has built strong relationships with families, particularly those facing difficult circumstances. Parents know whom to approach if they have concerns and trust that

the school will work with them sensitively to protect the well-being and safety of their children. Parents and staff are clear that they feel that children are safe at this school.

- The school works closely with external agencies and uses early help plans to get pupils the help and protection they need as quickly as possible. On occasions, the headteacher has challenged external agencies to improve their provision so that pupils' needs are met in a more effective and timely manner.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Over time, teaching has not provided enough challenge for the most able pupils or diminished the difference between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils with similar starting points nationally. At times, lessons and work are not well planned to match pupils' abilities.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving because of support for teachers. However, teaching is not yet consistently strong across all year groups. As a result, better teaching is needed to make sure that pupils catch up and achieve age-related expectations. A high level of staffing turnover has contributed to this mixed picture of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Teaching assistants have a positive impact on pupils' learning when working with small groups. However, when teachers are talking to the whole class, they do not always manage the work of teaching assistants effectively.
- The effective use of questioning by teachers and other adults varies from class to class. Where teaching is effective, pupils are asked questions that help them to deepen their learning. On other occasions, pupils are asked simple questions, or only pupils with their hands up are chosen.
- The teaching of writing is improving. Work in pupils' books shows that they are spelling more words accurately and have good handwriting skills. Time is spent ensuring that pupils develop their skills in writing for a specific genre and make effective use of vocabulary. Contexts for writing are set within topics that interest the pupils. For example, Year 2 pupils enjoyed writing about the 'superheroes' they had created. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to edit and redraft their writing. Also, pupils are not encouraged to readily apply their writing skills accurately in all subjects.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving but requires further improvement. Pupils use resources and images effectively to support their learning. They are given more opportunities to develop fluency and solve problems. The coverage of the mathematics curriculum is a key focus for improvement. There are, however, times when pupils have not secured an understanding of the skills taught and this is not picked up.
- Leaders have ensured developments in the teaching of reading. Assessment information indicates that pupils are showing a better understanding of the text and the number of pupils achieving the expected standard for their age is increasing. Pupils eagerly talk with each other about the stories they are reading and enjoy visiting the school library.
- The teaching of phonics is effectively meeting pupils' needs and is resulting in improving outcomes. Pupils use their phonics skills to read unknown words and are

encouraged to read regularly by staff. Pupils who are falling behind are supported well through intervention, which is helping them to catch up if necessary. Most pupils are now on track to meet the expected standard in phonics.

- The support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is broad, targeted and of a good quality. Additional support is planned well, resulting in these pupils making good progress. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the progress of these pupils.
- Leaders' progress meetings with teachers make sure that teachers' planning is tackling the legacy of underachievement. Specific teaching strategies and interventions are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' performance. This is helping more pupils make better progress than previously.
- Staff have established good working relationships with pupils, and as a result, pupils show respect and want to learn in lessons. Pupils use the prompts and reminders displayed in classrooms to help them with their learning. Teachers celebrate and promote achievement through awards and displays of the pupils' work.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils develop positive attitudes towards their learning, embracing and putting into effect the school's values.
- Pupils are confident and articulate and have positive self-esteem. They are keen learners and enjoy talking about their lessons. Almost all pupils take pride in their work. Pupils are polite, well mannered and thoughtful to others.
- Pupils said that bullying and name-calling are rare events. They said that they would tell an adult in school if bullying did occur, safe in the knowledge that the adult would deal with it for them.
- As a result of the good pastoral guidance and support offered, pupils' personal skills are developing well. Pupils said that they feel safe and secure. They are taught how to keep themselves safe, for example when online. Parents who met inspectors spoke very positively about how well their children are looked after.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and develop new skills. For example, a group of pupils are trained as peer mediators and they were very keen to tell inspectors about the good work they do. The school council has created a 'prayer garden', supporting the school's ethos and encouraging reflection.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff, pupils and parents all agreed that this is the case. Pupils respond quickly and correctly to instructions from staff. In class, pupils demonstrate positive behaviours for learning.
- Pupils' conduct around school, in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes is positive, and pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour. Pupils play together harmoniously and are well looked after at break- and lunchtimes. They have plenty of

equipment to use at lunchtime, such as skipping ropes, space hoppers and recyclable materials for den building.

- School records show that incidents of poor behaviour in the classrooms are extremely rare. When they do occur, effective strategies are put in place to support pupils with challenging behaviour, so learning is not disrupted.
- Pupils attend school regularly and overall attendance is broadly in line with the national average. There are no pupil groups who attend less than others. Leaders have put in place robust systems to ensure that attendance is celebrated and absence is challenged.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Historically, outcomes at the end of key stage 2 were below national averages. In reading, progress has been in the bottom 20% of all schools nationally for the last two years. Leaders have implemented strategies to bring about improvements in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, 2017 saw improved outcomes in reading and mathematics, but the attainment of disadvantaged pupils remains below that found nationally.
- Attainment in key stage 1 has been below national averages for some years. 2017 saw an improvement in attainment in reading and writing, although differences in the progress between all pupils and disadvantaged pupils remain.
- Assessment information for current pupils, including pupils' work in books, reflects further signs of improving progress in reading, writing, mathematics and other subjects. More pupils are now on track to achieve age-related expectations than in previous years. However, progress varies depending on year group and prior ability.
- Work in books shows that most-able pupils and most-able disadvantaged pupils make secure progress from their starting points. However, not enough pupils are on track to attain greater depth because, at times, tasks are not challenging enough.
- Improvements have been made to the teaching of phonics and this is supported by the school's tracking data. Pupils are taught how to pronounce the sounds and use this skill to decode unknown words. Results of current pupils now reflect a strength in phonics.
- Assessment information and pupils' work in books show that the progress disadvantaged pupils make has improved. However, gaps remain and fewer disadvantaged pupils are expected to achieve or exceed age-related expectations than other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress. The support provided by teachers and teaching assistants is effective and ensures that pupils succeed in their learning. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make good progress, through the support they are given.

### Early years provision

### Good

- When they join the school, most children have weaker skills than those typical of three-year-olds. For example, their communication, literacy and mathematical skills are less

well developed than those expected of children of a similar age. During their time in Nursery and Reception, children make good progress in all areas of learning. The proportion reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception Year is in line with the national average, ensuring that children are well prepared for their next stage in education. Children from all groups, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress.

- The quality of teaching in early years is good. Children are provided with opportunities to develop their communication and language through real-life experiences, practical activities and role play. For example, children in Nursery mix up their own modelling dough. One girl showed inspectors how she rolled out the modelling dough to make a model of her daddy. Children in Reception enjoy talking about the books they are reading and acting out the stories in the puppet theatre.
- Phonics is taught well, and children enjoy practising their letter sounds. For example, the children made good use of their phonic skills when decoding words, writing their own names independently and writing labels for their work.
- Teachers and other adults work together well, and a good team ethos exists. Teachers and other adults alike have a good grasp of what children can do. They work effectively as a team and use skilful questioning to assess children's learning and challenge them in their thinking.
- The strong emphasis on creating a caring and nurturing environment is evident from the very positive relationships adults have with children, and children have with each other. Staff consider strong relationships with parents as being crucial in establishing future positive attitudes to school life and encouraging parents to take an interest in their child's learning.
- The early years provision is led and managed well. The leader has a clear vision and understanding of good early years practice. The provision is constantly evaluated to ensure that the children have many opportunities to develop and apply the necessary skills and learning characteristics they need. Assessments are constantly analysed and the curriculum amended where there are gaps in learning. A great deal of emphasis is placed on ensuring that the children get off to a good start in early years.
- Staff develop children's independence, encouraging them to tidy up and have a go for themselves. For example, children were seen helping themselves to water from the drinking fountain if they were thirsty. Teachers gently encourage and guide children with their learning, avoid interfering and allow children to find out things for themselves.
- Routines are well established and children's behaviour is good. Adults are quick to provide support to children to help them understand the importance of being polite and treating one another with respect. Children play together well and are motivated to learn.
- Safeguarding is effective, and all statutory duties are met.



## School details

Unique reference number	141830
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10042834

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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	217
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Annette Manning
Principal	Mary Daniels
Telephone number	0121 464 1546
Website	<a href="http://www.stpaulrc.bham.sch.uk">www.stpaulrc.bham.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:dgaskin@stpaulrc.bham.sch.uk">dgaskin@stpaulrc.bham.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- St Paul's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy on 1 April 2015. When its predecessor school was last inspected, it was judged to require improvement.
- The school is part of the Lumen Christi Catholic Multi-Academy Company (MAC), which comprises six local Catholic schools. The MAC is governed by a board of directors, who have responsibility for all the schools. They delegate certain responsibilities to each school through their local academy committees. The academy committee focuses on the day-to-day operations of the school.
- Through Birmingham Education Partnership, the school has recently had the support of a local teaching school alliance.
- The school is an average-sized primary school with a part-time Nursery class.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, for whom the pupil premium funding provides support, is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who arrive at the school or leave the school during the school year is higher than the national average.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The majority of pupils are from a White British background. Others come from a range of minority ethnic groups. An increasing number of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- There have been staff changes recently.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups. Observations and shorter visits were also made with leaders.
- A group of pupils spoke to inspectors about their views of the school. Inspectors talked informally with pupils at break- and lunchtime and around the school. Inspectors also heard pupils read.
- Inspectors carried out a book scrutiny across a range of subjects and year groups to see how well pupils are learning and what progress they are making.
- An inspector met with local academy committee members and the accounting officer of the MAC.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including records of pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour, action and development plans, the school's own evaluation, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors spoke to the director of the teaching school alliance.
- Inspectors took account of the 11 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and talked informally with parents at the start of the school day about their views of the school.
- Inspectors considered the 14 responses to the staff questionnaire and met with a cross-section of staff to discuss their views of the school.

## Inspection team

Lynda Townsend, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Travis Latham

Ofsted Inspector

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