

St John's Catholic Primary School

School Lane, Great Haywood, Stafford, Staffordshire ST18 0SL

Inspection dates

31 January–1 February 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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

- In recent times, instability in staffing has led to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. As a result of shortcomings in teaching and the curriculum, pupils have some gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding, especially in mathematics.
- In 2018, attainment in Year 6 fell below the national average in reading and mathematics.
- Since converting to academy status, standards of behaviour and attendance declined and some parents lost confidence in the school.
- Following the appointment of a new headteacher and a merger with a new multi-academy company (MAC), clear structures and systems have been established to support school improvement and the quality of teaching. However, most initiatives are in an early stage of development and are yet to show significant impact.
- Sometimes, pupils' progress is limited because teachers do not build on pupils' prior learning effectively.
- Pupils' knowledge of phonics is not secure. Pupils do not routinely apply their phonics knowledge to decode unfamiliar words in reading.
- The quality of handwriting, spelling and punctuation requires improvement, because it is not consistently good across the school. Some pupils do not take enough pride in their work because teachers' expectations are not high enough.
- In mathematics, pupils have not developed secure strategies to help them in their calculations. They do not have sufficient opportunities to apply their learning in reasoning and problem-solving.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and members of the MAC are ambitious for the school and its pupils. The headteacher has made positive changes in the school. Communication has improved, behaviour has been addressed and positive relationships have been established.
- Parents have greater confidence in the school and appreciate the impact of school leaders.
- The quality of leadership, provision and practice in early years are effective and outcomes are good.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics, improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers build effectively on pupils' prior learning
 - pupils develop and apply secure phonics knowledge
 - teachers provide pupils with greater challenge in reasoning and problem-solving activities to deepen their understanding in mathematics
 - pupils develop greater fluency and confidence in mathematics by applying the skills, knowledge and understanding they already have
 - teachers have consistently high expectations for pupils' handwriting, presentation, punctuation and spelling.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since joining The Painsley Catholic Academy, the leadership of this small school has been strengthened. The school is now well placed to drive improvements. The chief executive officer (CEO) and directors of the MAC have a clear and strategic overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They know what needs to improve and have a comprehensive plan in place. The MAC has established strategic structures and systems to ensure that it can hold leaders to account effectively.
- Due to unavoidable staffing issues, most teaching staff are temporary. Leaders have sought to manage staffing as best they can and utilise support from other schools and staff within the MAC. To ensure greater continuity for pupils, the headteacher currently has a full-time teaching commitment. However, this is soon to be addressed.
- The CEO and deputy CEO visit regularly. They provide intensive and effective support and challenge to school leaders. With the headteacher, they monitor the quality of teaching and learning and set appropriate areas for development. The new assessment system, implemented this academic year, is helping leaders to keep a close eye on pupils' progress and attainment so that pupils do not fall behind.
- The school accesses professional development through the MAC. Subject leaders share good practice and meet regularly and the headteacher and senior leader join other schools' senior leadership meetings frequently. Leaders are taking steps to address the quality of teacher assessment in writing, through external moderation and moderation across the MAC.
- The English leader is new to post. She has taken positive action to improve outcomes in reading and writing. For example, she has delivered staff training on writing and has developed a new reading area with pupils. She has plans in place to develop further a new approach to reading.
- The headteacher is currently the leader of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There is a very small number of pupils on the SEND register. The headteacher knows them well and ensures that their needs are well met.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium funding has been used effectively so that more pupils now participate in physical activity and competitive sport. The use of qualified staff in areas such as gymnastics is improving the quality of provision in PE.
- Pupil premium funding is used appropriately so that disadvantaged pupils are supported well, according to their specific needs. For example, some pupils access breakfast club and as a result their attendance has improved. Pastoral support, additional resources, help in reading, writing and mathematics, and access to music lessons and school trips have improved pupils' behaviour, increased their confidence and supported their progress.
- The curriculum contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils wrote about what it was like to be a soldier in the trenches and considered how animals were affected by cutting down trees in the rainforest. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of fundamental British values. Specialist teachers from the MAC support the school in the teaching of music and PE. The curriculum is

currently under review so that leaders can ensure that the breadth and balance of the curriculum is further developed.

- Understandably, during the inspection, some parents raised concerns about the instability in staffing. Others, however, commented that the school has dealt with the unforeseen circumstances well to ensure the least disruption to pupils. Most parents have nothing but praise for the huge improvements that have been made. Many parents agree that the headteacher is 'turning the school around'. They appreciate the caring and welcoming environment and the 'excellent sense of community'.
- Staff are proud to work at St John's and agree that it has improved.

Governance of the school

- Directors of the MAC recognise the current vulnerability of the school. Consequently, they have ensured that the CEO provides strong, timely and effective support so that the school continues to improve. The MAC has ensured that there are clear lines of accountability between the local governing body (LGB), the CEO and the directors. It has established link governors from the LGB with responsibility for areas such as pupil premium, SEND, finance, safeguarding, health and safety and Catholic life. Link governors work closely with leaders to check the impact of additional funding such as the pupil premium and that safeguarding procedures are compliant. Members of the LGB are well supported in their roles. The LGB appreciates the training and guidance that the MAC provides. Link governors report directly to the MAC so that directors are well informed and maintain a clear oversight of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's procedures for the safe recruitment of staff are secure. Staff and governors are trained appropriately. Safeguarding is a regular agenda item at all meetings. Staff consider safeguarding scenarios and how to respond. Staff know who to report concerns about a child to and how to escalate concerns if necessary. The MAC's new system for reporting concerns will ensure that the school's record-keeping is more formalised.
- Governors check the school's safeguarding arrangements regularly.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe on the internet. If they have any concerns or worries, they would tell an adult. At the time of the inspection, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were preparing a presentation for parents on e-safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently good and therefore requires improvement. Consequently, standards across the school are inconsistent.
- In mathematics, pupils have not developed secure strategies to help them in their calculations. They do not have sufficient opportunities to apply their learning in reasoning and problem-solving. Pupils are not confident or secure in applying their

learning from one concept to another, for example in linking fractions and percentages.

- In some lessons, the pace of learning is slow and pupils lose concentration and interest. Pupils' misconceptions are insufficiently explored. Their understanding is not developed, because pupils are not encouraged to explain their learning. On occasion, learning is not structured well enough and teachers do not model the steps in learning effectively. This slows progress, because pupils are unsure what to do.
- Sometimes, pupils complete tasks that do not build effectively on what they can already do. Alternatively, the tasks do not focus precisely on what pupils need to improve or learn next. For some pupils, the work that they are given is too easy and for others it is too hard.
- Teachers do not routinely address errors and misconceptions and, as a result, basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics are not securely embedded.
- When teaching is effective and teachers give clear guidance pupils respond well. For example, pupils discussed how to listen to other people's opinions and worked collaboratively when sorting statements about whether animals should be kept in a zoo. When learning about e-safety, pupils were highly engaged because there was a clear learning purpose and the teacher's expectations were high. In PE, pupils followed teachers' directions well and explored how to warm their bodies up.
- Pupils enjoy reading. The most able pupils read fluently and with expression. Pupils read regularly and leaders promote 'reading for pleasure'. In a recent book week, pupils learned about diversity through the story of 'Grandad's secret giant' and were motivated to write some longer pieces of extended writing.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are well cared for. Leaders have a genuine desire to support pupils' physical development and emotional well-being. For example, the headteacher has ensured that pupils now have the opportunity to participate in activities after school, such as netball and football. Pupils speak positively about these activities and a high number take part. Through the curriculum, pupils learn about road safety and how to ride a bike safely.
- In most lessons, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning, especially when teachers are clear about the expected learning behaviours and teaching engages pupils well.
- Pupils are invited to contribute to school life. For example, the school council helped to develop the new reading area and agreed the reward system for good attendance.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of bullying, and, although they say it is rare, they have confidence that an adult would sort it out for them, if it did occur.
- Some pupils do not write neatly or take sufficient care in their work because teachers do not consistently expect them to.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming. They say 'good morning' to visitors and hold doors open. Pupils play together happily at lunchtime and playground leaders help to organise games.
- In 2018, attendance fell below the national average. As a result of leaders' effective actions to raise the profile of good attendance and tackle weak attendance, attendance has now improved.
- Previously, the percentage of fixed-term exclusions was above the national average. This has now reduced, because leaders have ensured that the right support is in place for pupils at risk of exclusion.
- Pupils appreciate the 'gems' they receive as part of the school's reward system. Special gems are awarded to pupils who go over and above. Leaders say, 'Good behaviour is expected as the norm.'

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The number of pupils in most year groups is small and, therefore, pupils' outcomes in each cohort can vary. In 2018, pupils' attainment in Year 6 fell below the national average in reading and mathematics. Overall, progress was in line with the national average. However, progress in mathematics was weaker than in reading and writing. Pupils' attainment in mathematics declined to below the national average in key stage 1.
- Current pupils in both key stage 1 and key stage 2 demonstrate gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding, especially in mathematics. Leaders say this is as a result of weak teaching in the past. However, pupils' work shows that the teaching of mathematics does not build effectively on pupils' prior learning. Pupils are not challenged sufficiently to deepen their learning or apply their mathematical skills in problem-solving and reasoning.
- In 2018, pupils at the end of key stage 1 achieved above the national average at the expected standard in reading and writing. There are weaknesses, however, in outcomes for current pupils in handwriting, spelling and punctuation in both key stage 1 and key stage 2. Although pupils in Years 5 and 6 are developing their use and understanding of vocabulary across a range of writing, the accurate use of spelling and punctuation is inconsistent. Some of the most able pupils in key stage 2 can write well-structured, interesting pieces and others are beginning to edit their work but these skills are not securely embedded. The quality of pupils' handwriting is too variable. Inaccurate formation of letters and numbers is not addressed sufficiently, particularly in key stage 1.
- Pupils' phonic knowledge is not secure. Pupils do not use their phonics knowledge or effective strategies to decode unfamiliar words in reading. Some pupils, especially lower-ability pupils, rely too heavily on pictures to work out what words say. Their reading books are not closely matched to their ability in phonics.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children join the early years with the knowledge, skills and understanding that are typical for their age. They make good progress so that, by the end of the Reception Year, they achieve a good level of development above the national average. As a result, children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Leadership of the early years is effective because the early years leader knows children well and plans appropriate next steps for their learning.
- Children in the early years are confident and happy in their learning because the quality of teaching and provision is good. Routines are well established and relationships are strong. Children respond well to adults. They are confident to take risks safely, because adults help them to understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, children knew not to run outside because it was icy.
- Children have access to a range of learning opportunities indoors and outdoors. They sustain interest and enjoyment in activities.
- Adults interact well with children and routinely model language. They build on children's interests and promote awe and wonder. For example, they encouraged children to look at frozen spider webs and chalk them on the floor.
- Adults develop children's writing well and encourage them to use capital letters, full stops and finger spaces when they are ready to do so. Although adults teach children how to write letters accurately, they do not routinely address children's inaccurate letter formation.
- In mathematics, children access resources independently and make number sentences. On occasions, adults do not deepen children's learning sufficiently or challenge them to apply their learning when they are capable of doing so.
- The school provides workshops for parents in phonics and cursive handwriting, for example, so that they can support their children's learning. Parents contribute to children's learning journeys with learning at home.
- Safeguarding is effective and statutory welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	142213
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10086927

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	76
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	John Pennington
Headteacher	Marie Therese Cornes
Telephone number	01889 343106
Website	www.st-johns-greathaywood.staffs.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@st-johns-greathaywood.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to an academy in March 2016 as part of The Holy Trinity MAC. In September 2018, The Holy Trinity MAC and the school joined The Painsley Catholic Academy.
- The Painsley Catholic Academy is governed by a board of directors. The LGB oversees the work of the school and reports directly to the board of directors.
- A new headteacher was appointed in April 2018. The school receives the support of specialist teachers from schools within the MAC on a weekly basis. The headteacher is mentored by the deputy CEO.
- The school received a section 48 inspection in November 2013. The school's next section 48 inspection has been arranged to take place during this academic year.
- The school is smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through pupil premium

funding is below the national average.

- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language are below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes and looked at pupils' work.
- The inspector observed pupils on the playground, talked to members of the school council and listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with: the headteacher; the leader for English and early years; the chair of the LGB; and the CEO, deputy CEO and directors of the MAC. The inspector also met with a representative of the diocese.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day and considered the 41 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, including the 29 written comments. The four responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including: the school's own evaluation of its performance; the school improvement plan; information on pupils' progress and attainment; records of behaviour and attendance; monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning; minutes of governing body meetings; governor monitoring reports and safeguarding information.

Inspection team

Sue Cameron, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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