

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Blue Lane East, Walsall, WS2 8HN

Inspection dates

8–9 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Achievement in Key Stage 2 is not yet good. While standards are broadly average in Year 6 there are wide variations between the attainment of boys and girls in reading and mathematics in this year group.
- Too few pupils make fast progress to reach the higher levels in writing and mathematics because they get too few opportunities to extend and apply their skills in other subjects.
- Weaknesses in some pupils' command of spelling, punctuation, handwriting and grammar are not tackled quickly. This holds back pupils' progress in writing.
- Teaching requires improvement. Teachers sometimes do not expect enough of the most-able pupils.
- Teaching assistants and other adults are not consistently used well to support pupils' learning.
- Leadership and management require improvement. Annual targets for raising staff's performance are not precise enough to enable senior leaders, including governors, to judge accurately whether planned improvements have been made.
- Leaders' monitoring of lessons does not focus sharply enough on how well pupils learn and is not rigorous enough in identifying weaknesses in their skills that need to be improved.

The school has the following strengths:

- Children do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 where attainment is rising rapidly, especially in Year 2.
- Early reading skills are taught well.
- Good new staffing appointments are helping to accelerate pupils' progress in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils behave well, feel safe and have positive attitudes to learning.
- The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, and governors are taking positive action to improve the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw all teachers and observed teaching in 10 lessons. Three of these lessons were observed together with senior leaders.
- Some pupils in Year 2 were heard reading.
- Samples of pupils' work in English and mathematics were analysed in detail.
- Meetings were held with school staff, a group of pupils, three governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 18 questionnaires completed by staff. There were too few responses within the last year to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, for them to be published. However, inspectors considered responses from parents, carers and pupils to the school's own recent surveys of their views about the school. An inspector spoke informally to some parents and carers at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors checked a range of evidence including: monitoring records; consultants' reports; school improvement plans; the school's own data on pupils' attainment and progress; and policies, procedures and practice relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Derek Aitken, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Valerie Palmer

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- Forty per cent of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The other pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. There are some pupils, mainly in the younger age groups, at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is slightly above average. In this school this additional funding supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- There have been several staff changes since the previous inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching consistently good or better by ensuring all teachers:
 - always provide the most-able pupils with work that makes them think hard and learn as quickly as they can
 - make consistently good use of teaching assistants and other adults to support pupils' learning in lessons.
- Improve pupils' progress and raise pupils' achievement, especially in Key Stage 2, by ensuring that:
 - weaknesses in pupils' command of grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting are tackled quickly
 - pupils are provided with a wider range of opportunities to extend and to apply their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders check closely during lesson observations the quality of pupils' learning and progress to sharpen their evaluations of teaching and to pinpoint the skills that pupils need to improve
 - senior leaders set staff sharp, measurable targets so that they can judge clearly whether they have improved their performance and set them new goals.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2013 was broadly average but pupils, especially boys, underachieved in reading.
- In 2013 the attainment of girls in Year 6 was much higher than boys' in reading, but much lower in mathematics. These gaps in attainment remain in the current Year 6 class.
- Assessment records show that pupils in the current Year 6 underachieved until the end of Year 5. Good teaching this year has enabled these pupils to reach broadly average standards but too few pupils attain the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most-able pupils sometimes spend too much time doing work which is too easy for them and this holds back their achievement.
- Weaknesses in pupils' writing skills, such as spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting, are sometimes not tackled quickly enough and persist in the written work of some pupils in the older age groups.
- Opportunities for pupils to extend and apply their writing and mathematical skills in subjects other than science and religious education are limited.
- Currently, achievement in Key Stage 2 is improving. Staffing improvements have reversed the decline in achievement, although too few pupils in Years 4 and 5 are working at more challenging levels.
- Improvements to tracking procedures and support programmes have helped to reduce gaps in the achievement of different groups. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are now making good progress. Pupils at an early stage of learning English, including pupils new to the school, settle in well and quickly catch up with their classmates. There are no significant differences in the attainment and progress of pupils of different ethnic backgrounds.
- Year 6 pupils in 2013 known to be eligible for additional funding, attained, on average, one year above their classmates in mathematics and writing. Their attainment in reading was similar to that of the other pupils. Across the school, there is no difference in the attainment and progress of eligible pupils and their classmates.
- Most children join Nursery with well-below average skills and aptitudes. Overall, they make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, although there is considerable variation from year to year in their attainment when they join Year 1. Last year pupils joined Year 1 with above-average attainment.
- Progress is improving rapidly in Key Stage 1, although too few pupils achieve the higher Level 3. Results in the Year 1 screening check for phonics (the sounds that letters make) were above the national average last year. Provisional results for this year show that Year 1 pupils have again exceeded the 2013 standard. Initiatives, such as the use of voluntary readers from a local charity, are proving effective in improving the skills of pupils who find reading difficult. Year 2 pupils, including the less able, read accurately and fluently because early reading skills are taught well.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Previous weaknesses in teaching meant that a large number of pupils did not develop their command of literacy and numeracy skills, especially in Key Stage 2, securely. Consequently, pupils' achievement has not been good. Currently, pupils' achievement is improving because of better teaching.
- Teachers do not consistently show that they have high enough expectations of what the most-able pupils can achieve. Not all tasks encourage them to think hard and to make rapid progress. This was observed, for example, in a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson where pupils only had the opportunity to handle data within a small range of numbers, and is also evident in the standards of work in pupils' books.

- Teachers provide pupils with learning activities that they enjoy, but pupils do not consistently make fast progress. Sometimes, as was observed in a Year 4 reading lesson, this is because teaching assistants or other additional adults are underused in lessons. Consequently, different groups of pupils do not develop their skills as well as they might do with adult support.
- Pupils' writing usually engages the reader, because they are taught the skills of descriptive writing well in English lessons. However, not all teachers regularly check closely pupils' use of spelling, punctuation and handwriting. Weaknesses are not always remedied quickly which slows pupils' progress.
- Pupils have few opportunities in other subjects to write on a wide range of purposes or to apply their numeracy skills. While mathematical skills are taught securely, pupils sometimes find it difficult to think of an alternative strategy if the first method they have chosen does not help them work out calculations.
- There is clear evidence that teaching is improving steadily across the school. Firm action has been taken to eliminate inadequate teaching and good, new appointments have been made. In most lessons, as for example in Year 6, teachers guide pupils' learning well. Pupils know what they are expected to learn, how to judge whether they have been successful and how they can raise the quality of their work. Questioning techniques have improved since the previous inspection which has helped pupils to use their speaking and listening skills more confidently.
- Much teaching currently makes for lively learning and capitalises fully on the good relationships that exist in lessons and which reflect pupils' positive attitudes. For example, good learning was observed in a Year 2 writing lesson. Pupils were successfully challenged to improve their knowledge of how alliterative adjectives could be used to capture the reader's attention. Pupils developed their ideas quickly because any misunderstandings were quickly corrected by the teacher.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is mainly good. Staff question children well, which enables them to gain confidence in sharing their ideas, but occasionally opportunities are missed to extend their learning, for example in the outside area.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Nursery and reception children talk to each other politely and cooperate well, for example while sharing equipment. They enjoy good relationships with staff. They settle quickly to their tasks and usually sustain their attention and concentration at work and play.
- Routines in lessons are established and most pupils manage their behaviour well, requiring little direction from staff. Pupils' behaviour in faith assemblies is often outstanding. They demonstrate a deep reverence for, and understanding of, spiritual themes and participate wholeheartedly in singing hymns.
- Most pupils enjoy learning and collaborate eagerly and usefully with each other in paired talk routines. Pupils are keen to respond and put their hands up quickly when asked questions. They are quick to volunteer to carry out particular duties.
- Pupils respond well to encouragement, rewards and opportunities to show responsibility, for example as school councillors or as buddies, or helping the dinner ladies in the dining hall.
- Pupils of different ethnic backgrounds mix easily with each other. Pupils greet visitors in a friendly and courteous way. They report that bullying is uncommon and that staff deal well with any incidents. Exclusions have reduced.
- Playtimes are effectively managed because areas have separate zones so that pupils can enjoy ball games or the trim-trail apparatus without disturbing those pupils who prefer to converse happily with their friends.
- Attendance rates have risen sharply this year after a dip last year. The importance of regular attendance is underlined in weekly newsletters. Systems for checking and promoting attendance are appropriate and effective.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Suitable procedures are in place for

monitoring visitors and independent checks are regularly carried out to ensure that health, fire and safety regulations are observed. The playground area is securely fenced. Staff are vigilant and step in quickly to support pupils needing any form of help.

- Leaders keep detailed behaviour logs. Although patterns of behaviour are not analysed for pupils or groups, separate incidents are clearly recorded and followed up quickly. Pupils say they feel safe in school, although they are occasionally troubled at play by passers-by on the adjoining street using bad language. They say that staff sort out any disputes between pupils fairly. Pupils are given clear advice in school about the safe use of social media and know that they should immediately tell an adult if they receive a 'nasty' message on the internet.
- Leaders ensure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive the required support, either directly in school or through the involvement of outside agencies.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Actions which have been taken by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher to raise achievement are not yet fully effective in enabling rapid improvements to be made in all areas of the school's work.
- Leaders have increased the scope and number of checks they carry out on the quality of teaching. However, they concentrate too much in their lesson observations on what the teacher is doing and do not take sufficient account of how well pupils are developing their skills either in the lesson or over time. As a result, some action plans to improve pupils' achievement lack sharpness.
- Senior leaders' evaluations of the overall quality of teaching across the school are over-generous. They do not weigh up carefully enough evidence from a range of sources, such as pupils' books, lesson observations and data on pupils' performance, to acquire a fully robust picture of the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement over time. Targets for raising the performance of individual staff are too imprecise to enable small-step improvements to be measured in their teaching or leadership skills and to set them new, clear goals.
- Senior leaders have managed staff changes well. This has enabled new middle leaders to settle into their roles quickly and exercise their responsibilities, including for leading the Early Years Foundation Stage, capably.
- The curriculum serves pupils adequately. Opportunities for pupils to extend or to apply their basic skills in subjects such as history or geography are limited and pupils' understanding of the lives of peoples in other countries is patchy.
- The school ensures that there is no discrimination and promotes equal opportunities adequately. Although gifted and talented pupils are identified, there are few planned activities to raise their aspirations. However, pupil premium funding has been used effectively, for example, to provide extra one-to-one support for identified pupils and to boost pupils' early speaking and reading skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is fostered well in lessons and, especially, in assemblies. Pupils show empathy for others through regular charity contributions, for example, on behalf of disabled people and in support of the work of MacMillan nurses.
- The first instalments of the national sports funding for primary schools have been spent appropriately. These monies have been used, for example, to expand sporting opportunities for pupils, such as table tennis and 'mini-kickers', and to promote healthy activities. Sports coaches have been employed and some teachers have been trained to improve their specialist skills.
- The local authority provides effective support for the school through regular checks and the work of specialist consultants, for example in mathematics, who have provided useful guidance for new staff in planning lessons.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have made some useful improvements to their work since the previous inspection. They have a realistic understanding of how well pupils are achieving and where pupils' performance is relatively stronger. They know that recent improvements in Key Stage 2 need

to be sustained and have recruited carefully to seek to ensure this. They know that pupils' skills in writing are a key area for improvement.

- In the last year they have developed a clearer appreciation of the use and impact of support programmes, such as those for pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, and where monies are best targeted.
- They have a clear overview of the quality of teaching and how this is reflected in pupils' progress but their knowledge of the Teachers' Standards for checking teachers' performance is imprecise. However, they make sure that suitable procedures are followed for reviewing the quality of the headteacher's work when decisions about pay rises are taken.
- Governors make sure that the school's systems for safeguarding pupils meet current national requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors. A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.

School details

Unique reference number	104233
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	442547

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	253
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendy Jevon
Headteacher	Gregory Gilroy
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2012
Telephone number	01922 720063
Fax number	01922 624144
Email address	postbox@st-patricks.walsall.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

