

St Andrew's Catholic Primary School

Windrush Close, Solihull, West Midlands B92 8QL

Inspection dates

28–29 September 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has set high expectations for what teachers and pupils can achieve. This has improved the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes since the last inspection.
- Leaders check rigorously on how well pupils are learning. Their actions have a clear impact on classroom practice, so that standards are continuing to rise.
- Governors are highly ambitious for the school, and have taken major steps to increase their own effectiveness.
- Teachers provide children in the early years with good opportunities to develop in all areas of learning. Children make strong progress, and are well prepared to start key stage 1.
- The school spends additional money for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities wisely. These pupils make good progress and catch up well.
- Firm expectations and good communications with families have led to a substantial increase in the rate of pupils' attendance, which is now above average.
- Some improvement plans lack precision about what leaders aim to achieve and the timescales within which they expect to achieve them.
- Teaching is good. Teachers set high standards, and introduce pupils to interesting and challenging topics, particularly in the early years and in upper key stage 2.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their learning, and regularly make good use of informative marking to improve their work.
- Sometimes, teachers do not combine classroom activities in a way which enables pupils to make the most rapid gains in knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Teachers frequently provide pupils with good opportunities to develop their skills in literacy and numeracy while studying other subjects.
- Pupils' progress across the school in a wide range of subjects is now good. However, a legacy of weaker progress earlier in their school career means that some pupils still have some catching up to do to reach the highest standards by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils rightly feel very safe in school. They conduct themselves well, and take a consistent pride in their work. Older pupils appreciate their additional responsibilities.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers consistently plan classroom activities which allow pupils to maximise their gains in knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Further improve leadership and management by ensuring that all improvement plans provide sufficiently detailed information for governors to check regularly on the school's progress.
- Increase the proportion of pupils attaining a high standard or working at greater depth at the end of key stage 2 by ensuring that teachers identify and tackle any remaining weaknesses in pupils' existing knowledge and understanding.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the last inspection, the headteacher has established clear expectations for good teaching and pupils' behaviour, and for how pupils can be encouraged to be more ambitious in their learning. Following a period of some instability, staffing is now much more settled and the quality of teaching is now good. At the same time, the headteacher has created what several parents described as a 'family feel' to the school, in which all adults and children feel welcomed and valued.
- Other leaders check carefully on how well pupils are learning, using a wide range of evidence. They have made significant improvements to teaching in the light of their findings, for example by placing an additional emphasis on handwriting and developing the use of reasoning in mathematics. The formal management of teachers' performance makes an effective contribution to improving the school because leaders set targets which are securely focused on improving teachers' current practice. Staff value the professional development that the school provides.
- The school's curriculum ensures that pupils learn a wide range of subjects. These are often taught in imaginative ways, with teachers retaining an appropriate focus on the skills and understanding associated with each subject. Pupils greatly appreciate the contribution which extra-curricular activities, largely in sport and dancing, make to learning. The school has spent the primary school physical education and sports premium very effectively on specialist coaching, improving teachers' skills and engaging more pupils from all year groups in sport outside timetabled lessons.
- Teachers frequently assess in detail pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They check their judgements about pupils' work regularly against those in other schools locally. Regular meetings to discuss the progress of each pupil hold teachers closely to account.
- Starting in the early years, teachers and leaders are skilled at identifying children who have additional academic and social needs, involving external agencies when appropriate. Leaders monitor closely the impact of any special provision, and amend or stop it if it is not working. This enables additional money for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to be spent very effectively.
- During the inspection, leaders' views about the quality of teaching accorded well with those of the inspectors. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths, and of where it still needs to improve. However, some written plans and evaluations do not provide governors with precise measures of success and timescales against which they can judge progress towards the school's objectives.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social education effectively. This is reflected in the very good relationships among pupils, and between pupils and adults. Pupils' cultural education is also effective and was well demonstrated by work and wall displays stimulated by a study of Jewish culture, and pupils were able to recall in detail their visit to a local synagogue. Pupils' understanding of British values is strong. The school council promotes pupils' awareness of democracy, the value of rules and the

importance of participation. Older pupils are encouraged to adopt positions of responsibility in the school, and clearly understand the benefits that this brings to them and to others.

- The local authority has provided valuable support for the school, in particular by providing guidance as leaders implement the new national curriculum, and standardisation for new systems of assessment.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective.
- Governors have a good overview of the school. Individual governors bring particular strengths to the governing body, for example in finance, leadership and wider educational experience. Those who are relatively new to the board have taken every opportunity to understand their role, and how they can best support and challenge the school. There is no complacency, and governors are anxious to add further to their effectiveness.
- Governors work closely with the headteacher and visit the school frequently. They make sure that they are well informed about pupils' progress at the school, and how it compares with pupils nationally. They check on the expenditure of additional money provided to support particular groups of pupils, and evaluate its impact on their progress.
- The governing body regularly makes sure that the school's procedures keep pupils safe in all respects. They ensure that the right checks are made on all staff who work at the school or otherwise come into contact with children.
- Governors involve an independent adviser in their management of the headteacher's performance so that decisions about his role are well founded. They provide an independent perspective on the pay and performance of other staff

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's arrangements meet all statutory requirements. The headteacher has ensured that the staff are familiar with the most recent guidance, and have been fully trained. All staff are vigilant and know the school's policies and procedures very well.
- Inspectors found that staff keep detailed records, and work well with parents and other agencies to help pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have been successful in improving the quality of teaching significantly since the last inspection. Observations of learning, scrutinies of pupils' workbooks and the school's assessment information show that teaching is now typically good. As the school is aware, it is strongest in upper key stage 2 and in the early years. Leaders also acknowledge that some gaps in pupils' skills remain, and that some pupils have catching up to do to achieve the high standards of which they are capable.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning, and

pupils respond very well to these. All teaching is characterised by very strong relationships between pupils and adults.

- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and explain new ideas clearly. They use the correct subject specific terms from the youngest age onwards, such as those relating to phonics.
- Pupils are almost always fully engaged in their learning partly because they are offered the opportunity to learn in a variety of ways, and partly because the work presents an appropriate level of challenge to pupils of all abilities, including those who are most able. For example, in English in Year 6, pupils studying Tennyson's poem 'The Lady of Shalott' were made to examine the text in detail to support their answers to searching questions about the poem's meaning and context.
- Teachers take every opportunity to develop pupils' literacy and mathematical skills right across the curriculum. For example, in a Year 2 lesson focused on earthworms, pupils were recording their findings in a weekly diary, and developing longer spoken responses to questions. Key stage 1 work from last academic year showed pupils using tally charts, pictograms and bar charts accurately in their study of science and geography.
- Teachers use a variety of techniques to gauge pupils' level of understanding effectively, including targeted questioning and mini-whiteboards for each pupil to record their answer. Pupils respond very well to teachers' feedback on their work. Pupils both correct their mistakes and also act on more general suggestions for improvement. In this way, feedback makes a major contribution to pupils' progress.
- Regular homework makes up an important part of the curriculum. Pupils understand its role in consolidating their learning, and checking whether they can apply their skills unaided. It was evident during the inspection that several pupils had done online research at home to further their understanding of particular topics.
- Phonics is taught to younger pupils in an effective way, and pupils learn to write the letters which correspond to the sounds alongside learning to read. The strong teaching means that weaker readers are able to tackle unfamiliar texts with confidence. Pupils very much enjoy reading, and a scrutiny of reading records showed that most pupils read quite extensively at home. The most able readers have a mature understanding of demanding texts, and can compare different books in complex ways.
- Mathematics teaching has been developed to ensure a substantial focus on reasoning and on the practical application of mathematics. During the inspection, pupils discussed in animated fashion why they believed a mathematical statement to be true or false.
- Although teachers present pupils with challenging questions, and activities move at a smart pace, learning sometimes lacks a little focus because the activities have not been planned sufficiently carefully for pupils to make the rapid gains in knowledge, skills and understanding of which they are capable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel very safe in school. They report that a few pupils are occasionally unkind to each other, but that they always have an adult they can turn to, and that problems are always sorted out.
- The school successfully teaches children how to be safe in several respects, including how to stay safe online, cycling proficiency and other road safety measures. The school tries to ensure that every child leaves able to swim, and aware of water hazards. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors appreciated how a ban on mobile phones for everyone at the school helps to keep them safe.
- Pupils are well-mannered, friendly and enjoy school. In the classroom, pupils have the self-confidence to put forward their point of view, and to challenge others politely but firmly. At the same time, inspectors saw work which resulted from pupils imagining what it was like to be a historical character, or someone very different from themselves.
- The school takes clear steps to encourage pupils to be more independent. Older pupils respond well to additional responsibilities such as acting as a sports leader or monitor at lunchtime, understanding how they can help younger pupils as well as develop their own skills.
- The school is an attractive, calm and purposeful learning environment. The playground has a range of sturdy and well-designed equipment. This encourages pupils to play happily and to be physically active.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. It has improved since the last inspection in response to more challenging teaching and leaders' insistence on high standards of conduct.
- Pupils enjoy learning, and are willing to study hard and use their own initiative. Teachers give careful thought to pairing and grouping children in the classroom, so that they develop the ability to collaborate and learn from each other.
- Pupils follow staff instructions quickly and settle to their work without fuss. They take an unflinching pride in their work, and present it neatly even when this proves to be demanding. Pupils' conduct moving around the school, in the dinner hall and the playground, is very orderly.
- The school used exclusion on a handful of occasions in the 2014/15 academic year, but has not done so since. Inspection evidence showed that the very few pupils who enter the school with challenging behaviour respond well to the clear boundaries which staff put in place.
- The school has created a team of staff who operate in a well-coordinated way to promote the importance of attendance, reward those who come to school regularly, and work intensively with the parents of those pupils whose attendance begins to tail off. As a result, pupils' attendance has improved markedly over the last two years.

Attendance overall, and the attendance of almost all groups of pupils, is now above average.

- On rare occasions, a few pupils are a little distracted and the class becomes a little noisy.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Since the last inspection, outcomes for pupils have improved. In all key stages, pupils are now making good progress and standards are rising.
- Information supplied by the school and evidence from workbooks show that pupils are currently making good progress in English and mathematics across almost all year groups. Last year's books also showed strong progress in a number of other subjects including science, history and religious education.
- Pupils left Year 6 in 2015 with a level of attainment which was average overall, having made progress from their different starting points which was also broadly in line with pupils nationally. Unvalidated information indicates that pupils' attainment in this year's key stage 2 test results were also in line with the national average. Pupils' progress overall across the key stage was no higher than the national average because pupils have been making up for the weaker progress made when they were in the younger years.
- In the last two years, key stage 1 pupils have attained in line with the national average, and the proportion of Year 1 pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics has been at or above that seen nationally. In both 2015 and 2016, all pupils in the cohort have left Year 2 having met the expected phonics standard, reflecting the school's effective approach to phonics teaching and support for those pupils identified as at risk of falling behind.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils in each cohort is relatively small, but taken as a whole, recent test results together with inspection evidence show that disadvantaged pupils are making progress in line with other pupils nationally. A detailed examination of disadvantaged pupils' exercise books showed that their strong progress matched that of the other pupils in the class. There was good evidence that the school had successfully used the pupil premium grant to help them overcome any barriers to learning that they had faced.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, starting in the early years, where staff quickly identify their additional needs and how these can best be met. The school has developed a very effective range of strategies to support pupils with some more complex needs, and they make particularly strong progress.
- Teachers pay consistent attention to handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar. As a result, standards in these aspects of writing are generally high.
- Until recently, the most able pupils had made progress which was average at best, but pupils currently in the school have responded very well to the increased attention paid to their needs. The most able now have greater opportunities to make decisions about their own learning and to stretch themselves academically. The workbooks from last academic year of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils,

showed good or better progress, and some of the pieces were of an exceptional standard. This was particularly true of creative writing. For example, inspectors saw in Year 5 a series of beautifully crafted diary entries in the character of Howard Carter as he discovered Tutankhamen's tomb in 1922.

- There is still work to be done, however, to ensure that all those pupils capable of attaining a high standard or writing at greater depth by the end of key stage 2 do so. For many, their progress until recently has not been consistently strong, and some gaps remain in their knowledge and understanding.

Early years provision

Good

- The majority of children start the Nursery Year with skills and abilities which are typical for their age. Leaders rapidly identify the small number of children who enter the school each year requiring additional support. They then make sure that extra help is put in place, drawing on the support of other agencies when necessary. A very few children each year join the Reception class from other nursery providers, and, as one parent told the inspectors, staff take great care to ensure that they are made to feel welcome.
- Information supplied by the school and confirmed by inspection evidence shows that almost all children make good progress, and those whose abilities are less well developed when they join the school start to catch up. Unvalidated information indicates that the proportion of children who left Reception having attained a good level of development rose in 2016 to be just above the 2015 national average.
- Teaching in the early years is good. Teachers have high expectations of children's manners, set clear boundaries for behaviour, and establish effective routines. Relationships between adults and children are noticeably warm. Staff ensure that children have a rich experience of all seven areas of learning, but place a particular emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, children are well prepared to start key stage 1.
- Children feel happy and secure in the early years setting, and behave well. They respond quickly and without fuss to staff requests. All staff get to know the children well, and are alert to any welfare issues. Children learn progressively how to be more independent, for example by tidying up at the end of an activity or looking out for another child. Staff are well trained in paediatric first aid.
- Leaders ensure that parents are closely involved with their children's learning. Staff regularly discuss children's individual progress, and how parents can help at home. They also invite parents to presentations and workshops to explain in detail particular aspects of the provision.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the early years, and plan improvements in detail. They ensure that staff work together as a highly effective team. Leaders make sure that children's starting points and assessments are checked regularly against those of other local schools. Both the indoor and the outdoor areas are attractive and well resourced.
- Teachers assess frequently what children can do, and use these judgements to plan

activities which represent the appropriate next steps for each individual. However, inspection evidence confirmed the belief of school leaders that these assessments are sometimes not sharply focused on the specific skills children should be learning during the activity. In these circumstances, teachers' planning of activities for children lacks a little rigour and challenge.

School details

Unique reference number	104099
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	10009250

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anita O'Sullivan
Headteacher	David Naughton
Telephone number	0121 743 5675
Website	www.st-andrews.solihull.sch.uk
Email address	office@st-andrews.solihull.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 March 2014

Information about this school

- St Andrew's Catholic Primary School is an average-sized primary school. Pupils Children attend full time in the Reception class, but for the morning session only in the Nursery class. The school runs Jigsaws Childcare, which provides pay-as-you-go wrap-around care, including provision during the afternoon for pupils in the Nursery class.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about governors' backgrounds and interests on its website.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.

- In 2015, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 14 lessons and one further learning walk. Five observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders. The inspectors also observed pupils' conduct at break and lunchtime, and the care provided by Jigsaws Childcare.
- The inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, subject leaders, class teachers, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Two groups of pupils selected at random met with the inspectors. They also spoke to many other children informally. One inspector listened to pupils in Years 2, 5 and 6 read.
- The inspectors looked at some of the work already produced this academic year and, with subject leaders, scrutinised in depth the work produced by some pupils last year. They considered a wide range of information about pupils' current and recent performance.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, both electronically and on paper. These included: development plans and their evaluations; records of how leaders check on teaching; minutes of governing body meetings; policies; wall displays; and records showing how the school supports vulnerable pupils.
- The inspectors took into account the 65 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, written responses from parents and the school's record of parental surveys. The inspectors also spoke to a substantial number of parents delivering their children to school. The inspectors also considered the 20 responses to the questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

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