

# St Paul's Catholic Junior School

Spring Grove, West Derby, Liverpool, Merseyside L12 8SJ

## Inspection dates

4–5 May 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                 |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have worked effectively to bring about improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress since the last inspection.
- Outcomes for pupils are now good. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. Current attainment is above average or improving swiftly for all year groups.
- Governors know the school well and are frequent visitors there. They have high aspirations for the school and support school improvement effectively. They challenge leaders by holding them to account for the progress pupils make.
- Teaching, learning and assessment have improved and are now consistently good.
- Pupils behave well, show pride in their school and are keen to learn. They say that they feel safe and well looked after by adults in school.
- Parents speak very positively about the school and praise the good level of communication. The vast majority would recommend the school to another parent.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always set tasks or ask questions which challenge pupils to deepen and extend their learning.
- Staff do not always use their knowledge of pupils' abilities to ensure that pupils are clear about their next steps in learning.
- Subject leaders for subjects other than English and mathematics are not fully involved in further improving outcomes in their subject areas.

## Full report

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

- Further raise the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - developing staff questioning so that it more consistently deepens pupils' understanding and pupils are challenged to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects
  - ensuring that staff use their knowledge of pupils' skills and abilities more incisively when giving feedback, so pupils are clear on how to improve.
- Ensure that leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics develop in their roles in monitoring the quality of teaching and progress in their subject to strengthen the impact of their work on pupils' outcomes.

# Inspection judgements

## Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders and governors have created a culture of high expectation and a commitment to providing the best possible education for pupils. This culture is fully shared by staff. Under the determined leadership of the headteacher, leaders have brought about improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' outcomes since the last inspection.
- Leaders' systems to monitor the quality of teaching and to promote the professional development of staff have improved. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good.
- Staff appreciate the range of training provided. They have engaged in a broad range of training to further develop their skills in teaching mathematics, and this has had a positive effect on improving current progress and attainment for pupils. However, there is more to be done to ensure that pupils use their improved mathematical skills in other subjects.
- The leadership of English and mathematics is well established. Leaders are knowledgeable about their subjects and monitor the quality of teaching to ensure it is good. Leadership of other subjects is less well developed. Leaders have received training in monitoring the progress of their subjects but have yet to develop this aspect of their role in order to improve outcomes even further.
- The curriculum is wide, varied and interesting and contributes to pupils' positive attitudes to learning and to school. It is complemented by many out-of-school activities, which broaden pupils' experiences and learning. Pupils attend activities such as environmental club, road safety club and a variety of sports clubs.
- Leaders and governors ensure that pupils' understanding of British values is promoted effectively. Pupils develop an understanding of democracy through elections to the school council. They learn to value and respect the views of others. Pupils' understanding of other faiths, beliefs and cultures is positively promoted through the curriculum as, for example, they learn about Islam, Judaism, Spanish language and culture, and African art.
- School leaders ensure that additional funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium is used wisely. Additional teaching staff are used well to provide support for pupils who need it, and as a result gaps have closed significantly since the last inspection and continue to narrow.
- The sport premium funding is used effectively to provide a wide range of sports in school and competitive events outside school. Participation levels are high because pupils enjoy sport. Clubs such as athletics, football, netball and cricket are open to all.
- Leaders have established a positive partnership with parents. Inspectors' conversations with parents, the responses of parents via Parent View and text message to Ofsted show that parents are highly positive about the work of the school. They praise the level of information they receive about their child's progress and consider that their children are safe and well taught.
- The local authority has provided effective support to the school since the last inspection. Regular reviews and guidance, and good use of the expertise of English and mathematics advisers, have helped the school to improve and to ensure that assessments of pupils' learning and skills are accurate.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors use their broad range of relevant skills and expertise to provide good support and effective challenge for school leaders. They share the ambition and aspirations of the headteacher and senior leaders to ensure that the school continues to improve and provide the best possible education for its pupils.
  - The governing body has a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and the key priorities for further development. This is achieved by receiving information from the headteacher, analysis of pupils' progress information and their own monitoring visits.
  - Governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and the management of staff performance and ensure that good teaching is rewarded.
  - Governors are clear about how additional funding, including the pupil premium, is used and check to make sure that it is making a difference for pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that record-keeping is meticulous and the school provides a very safe environment for pupils. Staff receive up-to-date training and all understand their responsibilities concerning child protection and safeguarding. Leaders work well with parents, carers and other agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

is good

- Leaders' focus on improving the quality of teaching since the last inspection has ensured that this is now consistently good. Evidence from pupils' books, the school's information about progress and learning observed in lessons shows that teaching of reading, writing and mathematics and a range of other subjects, including science, is good throughout the school.
- Staff have good subject knowledge and provide activities that interest and engage pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils show enthusiasm and focus well as they are effectively guided to write from the point of view of a character in a film. They respond well to discussions about short film clips they are shown and learn to apply and deepen their understanding of how to construct interesting and accurate sentences.
- Teaching often provides a good level of challenge to extend and deepen pupils' learning. For example, Year 4 pupils learning to calculate the perimeter of shapes are questioned well to encourage them to think and explain their reasoning and use mathematical vocabulary.
- On occasion pupils, particularly the most able, are not challenged sufficiently to make sure their learning is extended, for example where tasks are too easy or where questioning does not allow pupils to think deeply about their learning.
- Pupils' reading skills are well taught. Staff plan activities to ensure that pupils are well supported to develop their understanding and enjoyment of reading. As a result, most pupils enjoy reading and are making good progress.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved as the result of recent training. Staff use their good subject knowledge to ensure that pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts is effectively broadened and developed so that they make good progress.
- Teachers ensure that pupils' writing skills are developed and applied in other subjects. Pupils write fluently in subjects such as history and geography. However, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support to individuals and groups of pupils to support their good progress.
- Teachers implement the school's marking policy well, in providing feedback to pupils to help them improve further. However, the feedback provided does not always clearly show pupils how they can improve.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school provides a warm, caring environment. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and pupils show respect for staff and one another.
- Pupils are proud of their school and of their roles in school, such as school councillor or e-cadet.
- Pupils show a good understanding of how to keep safe, including from the dangers of the internet. Activities such as internet safety week successfully develop this understanding and pupils who are e-cadets showed enthusiasm as they led a presentation to the whole school.
- Pupils say that bullying in the school is rare and when it happens it is dealt with effectively by staff.
- Parents overwhelmingly agree that the school keeps their children safe.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well at breaktimes, lunchtimes and around the school. They have a clear understanding of school rules. Pupils calmly line up to go inside and sit quietly and attentively in assembly.
- Pupils are attentive in class, concentrate well and engage fully in their learning. Occasionally, a few become distracted when the work they have been given is not sufficiently challenging. When this happens, they do not take enough care to produce their best work.
- School leaders have worked hard to improve attendance recently, and it is currently just below the national average. Pupils respond well to the school's attendance league, where they receive awards for good attendance.
- Persistent absence levels have reduced, due to effective work with parents to improve attendance.

## Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Progress and attainment have improved since the last inspection and outcomes are now good.
- The current Year 3 pupils are making good progress from broadly average starting points. Good progress is being made by pupils throughout the school in English and mathematics and in a range of other subjects, including science.
- Progress shows an improvement on that shown in published data for 2015, which indicated that progress, particularly in reading, was not good. The proportions of pupils making more than expected progress were below national averages for reading, writing and mathematics. Evidence from lesson observations, pupils' books and the school's own information about progress shows that pupils are currently making good progress and many are making more than expected progress.
- Attainment has risen since the last inspection, and in 2015 was significantly above average in reading, and broadly average in writing and mathematics. Improvements to the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics, mean that current attainment is rising. This is particularly the case for Year 3 and Year 4 pupils who did not go through the period of less than good progress experienced by pupils at the school at the time of the previous inspection.
- Disadvantaged pupils make at least good progress and the gap between them and other pupils in the school is closing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress from their starting points due to the effective support that they receive.
- The most-able pupils generally make good progress, but at times their progress slows when activities or questioning do not extend their learning sufficiently.
- Pupils' positive outcomes, and their good behaviour and personal development, mean that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

## School details

|                                |           |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 104661    |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Liverpool |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 10012086  |

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

|                                            |                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                                                                                    |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary aided                                                                            |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 7–11                                                                                       |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                                                                      |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 507                                                                                        |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                                                                         |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Anthony McKee                                                                              |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Edward Flood                                                                               |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 0151 228 1159                                                                              |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.spcj.co.uk">www.spcj.co.uk</a>                                         |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | <a href="mailto:pauls-ao@st-pauls.liverpool.sch.uk">pauls-ao@st-pauls.liverpool.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 21–22 January 2014                                                                         |

## Information about this school

- This is a much larger-than-average junior school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. Pupil premium is the additional government funding used to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals or children looked after.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- In 2015, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning throughout the school. In addition, inspectors scrutinised pupils' workbooks and listened to them read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the chair of the governing body and three other governors, the headteacher and other senior leaders. The inspectors also held a meeting with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information produced by the school, including information on pupils' progress and attainment, behaviour and attendance, procedures for safeguarding and the school's own evaluation of its work. They considered reports to the governing body, minutes of their meetings and the school's plans for further improvement.
- Inspectors considered the 45 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 33 parents who expressed their views via text message to Ofsted. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.
- There were no responses to the pupil or staff questionnaires to consider. Inspectors spoke to pupils and staff during the course of the inspection and considered their views.

## Inspection team

|                              |                  |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Elaine White, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Schylene Ferris              | Ofsted Inspector |
| Cathy Parkinson              | Ofsted Inspector |

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