

# St Pius X Catholic Primary School

Tennyson Road, , Chelmsford, CM1 4HY

## Inspection dates

26–27 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires Improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- Despite good progress in their early years, pupils' progress slows so that by the end of Key Stage 2, standards are no better than average, and slightly below average in mathematics.
- Although teaching in the lower part of the school is now consistently good, in the upper school, teaching of writing and mathematics requires improvement.
- In weaker lessons, work is not set at the right level so that all pupils can make the best progress possible.
- Teachers do not always plan questions carefully enough to help pupils broaden and deepen their learning.
- School leaders have not yet eliminated all weaknesses in teaching. Governors require more training in understanding the link between teaching quality and pupils' achievement so that they can more effectively hold the school to account.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and governors have high ambitions with good plans based on accurate self- evaluation.
- Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is good and it is improving for other groups.
- The teaching of early reading skills is exemplary and pupils make good progress in reading throughout the school.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They enjoy school and feel safe in school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed fifteen lessons or part lessons, two of which were joint observations with the head teacher. They also scrutinised the work of the pupils, and listened to a number of pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents including the school improvement plan, monitoring files, minutes of governors’ meetings, data on pupils’ past and current progress and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- The inspector took account of the 54 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered the 16 questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Ronald Cohen, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Tomkins

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding provided for children in local authority care, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs and are supported at school action is in line with national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has received many awards. These include: Eco Schools Award, Sport England and the Football Association Charter Standard awards, and Healthy Schools Plus award.

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

- Improve teaching , particularly in Key Stage 2, so that it is at least consistently good by ensuring that:
  - pupils' work is set at the right level to help them all, including the most able, to achieve their best
  - questioning of pupils about their work gives them time to reflect before answering and also allows them to broaden and deepen their learning.
  - pupils are encouraged to use their good reading skills to help them write more creatively.
- Raise standards in mathematics by ensuring that pupils understand concepts and can apply them to a range of mathematical problems.
- Make sure that the governing body has more training in the detailed analysis of pupils' achievement throughout the school in order to be able to support and challenge the school more effectively.
- Ensure senior leaders maintain robust monitoring of teaching, particularly at Key Stage 2.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement across the school is inconsistent. Progress in reading is good and attainment is high. Progress in writing and mathematics is slower, resulting in average attainment in writing and slightly below average in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Most children start school with skills that are below, and some well below, those typically expected at their age, particularly in language and number work. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 and so attain at least as well as expected for pupils of their age.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is a real strength with some exemplary practice. Pupils are challenged and expectations of them are high. As a result, all pupils make good progress, and are very communicative. Their good progress in reading continues through the school.
- In writing, pupils' work is presented legibly and care is taken over punctuation. Writing in formal prose, such as letters, is improving and is of a higher standard than independent, free writing. This is because pupils are not always encouraged to use their wide reading to help them write more creatively.
- In mathematics, most pupils in Key Stage 2 have gaps in their understanding of basic concepts resulting from weaker teaching in the past. Pupils have made progress in basic number skills, but they are often unable to apply these to problem solving.
- Those pupils who are supported by extra funding through the pupil premium are provided for with additional support, and they are making strong progress, particularly in their personal development and growing confidence. Their standards are in line with other pupils in the school. Their reading is above average; their writing is improving and is in line with national averages.
- The majority of pupils from minority ethnic groups are making satisfactory progress. Well-tailored support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, is helping them to make progress at rates similar to others in the school. However, boys of White British background are not always achieving their potential.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding in Reception and in Key Stage 1, but is not consistently good at Key Stage 2. Where teaching requires improvement, a common weakness is that teachers do not take into account the different attainment levels of pupils in the class, and vary the tasks accordingly. This is especially true for pupils of higher ability who could make more rapid progress.
- Often, too, teachers ask questions which merely seek a 'yes' or 'no' answer, or they give pupils insufficient time to reflect before offering an answer. Thus, pupils do not deepen their understanding or practise the higher order skills of thinking independently. In particular, the

lack of probing questioning means that teachers do not know whether pupils have understood and can apply mathematical concepts.

- However, all lessons had some common strengths. Good relationships between staff and pupils lead to a happy, supportive environment. Good levels of support are given by teaching assistants. Marking of pupils' work provides a good summary of how well pupils have done, and highlights what they must do to improve their work even further.
- Good and outstanding lessons were further characterised by high expectations of the pupils, with challenges which made them think hard and encouraged them to work independently and apply their knowledge in new contexts.
- A good range of activities, based on the different levels of attainment of pupils in the lesson, also gave pupils a chance to engage in those which stimulated their imagination most. For example, in a Year 3 lesson on symmetry, four different challenges were set before the class, with the exhortation by the teacher to 'try the one above where you are comfortable'. Pupils responded well to this, and good progress was made.
- There are a number of strengths in the Early Years Foundation Stage which contribute greatly to the very good start which children make in school, particularly the teaching of phonics. Assessment of children's progress is frequent and informs the planning of new activities. Good relationships between adults and children lead to children being enthusiastic, engaging and communicative, while having the confidence to increase their independence

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils behave well in lessons, around the school and during play time and lunch time. The few pupils who struggle to manage their behaviour are supported well by the staff, and this has resulted in their better behaviour.
- Attendance is average and rising, demonstrating that pupils increasingly enjoy being in school. They feel safe in school because the site is secure and because, as they say, there is very little bullying. If bullying were to occur, pupils know who to go to and are confident that it would be dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Pupils show a good understanding of how to behave safely and the dangers of crossing the road, talking to strangers, or cyber-bullying, for example.
- The very inclusive nature of the school, together with the impact of the school's ethos, assemblies and teaching, leads to not only an understanding of the diversity of backgrounds, but builds an harmonious and tolerant attitude towards them, characterised by respect for each other.
- Pupils take on a range of responsibilities happily, such as register monitors or members of the school council and many take up the opportunities to attend the wide range of clubs which are open to them.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are helped to make very good progress in their personal and social skills.
- Adults are very experienced at helping pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable to

develop their self-esteem, and build a positive attitude to school life.

## **The leadership and management** require improvement

- The headteacher and the governing body have taken appropriate action to improve the work of the school since the last inspection. The headteacher has demonstrated resilience, determination and vision in tackling issues such as improving reading, behaviour and attendance. As a result, this is an improving school. However, leadership and management require improvement because pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are not consistently good over time.
- The headteacher has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is based on an accurate self-evaluation. The school improvement plan is ambitious and includes challenging short-term targets. Under the leadership of the headteacher, staff work as a team and share a common purpose.
- The quality of teaching is monitored well by the headteacher through a formal programme of lesson observations. This information, alongside evidence of the progress that pupils make, is used to inform decisions on salaries and promotions. This has led to the eradication of inadequate teaching throughout the school.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator has made strong and successful impact on the progress and standards of pupils, not only in the Reception Year, but also in Key Stage 1. Her leadership and direction of the use of phonics has palpable success in reading across the whole school. Its influence on pupils' writing is more clearly seen, as yet, in earlier rather than the later years of the pupils' journey through school.
- The school leadership ensures that there is no discrimination, so all pupils have full access to all aspects of the good and broad curriculum. This is extended to provide experience of the arts and culture, including visits to theatres, art galleries, and other places of interest. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school is particularly strong at giving pupils opportunities to reflect on both their own faith and that of others, so increasing their knowledge, understanding and respect for other faiths and cultures.
- The school is receiving appropriate support and advice from the local authority. The school is using links with local schools to strengthen its teaching. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, and the work of its teachers and leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governors are supportive and reflective. They are involved in many aspects of the school's work. They ensure that safeguarding meets requirements. Recent training has resulted in a more comprehensive understanding of their roles, and there is a growing awareness of the need to be more involved in performance management of all staff. Governors' understanding of data about pupils' progress is improving. They are aware of how additional funding is used and how the impact of this is measured. They are aware that governance lacks the deeper understanding of pupils' achievement. They show determination to improve in this so that they can provide the school with greater support and challenge.

## 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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	115192
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	401502

This inspection of the school 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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	207
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jeremy Milligan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anthea Caddy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01245 354875
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