

St Pius X Catholic Primary School

Tennyson Road, Chelmsford, CM1 4HY

Inspection dates 16–17 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Teaching in Key Stage 1 is not good. Consequently, these pupils, especially the most able, do not achieve as well as they should.
- Some Key Stage 1 pupils who have difficulties with learning also do not make enough progress. The support and teaching they receive is not consistently good.
- Too few governors are able to compare the school's performance data with other schools nationally. Consequently, their ability to challenge senior leaders to ensure pupils make better progress is limited.
- The Key Stage 1 leader lacks the opportunity to check on the quality of teaching. As a result, teachers have not had enough support to improve their practice.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors have improved teaching and pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2, where teaching is consistently good and pupils are making at least good progress.
- Pupils enjoy school and feel safe in it. Behaviour is good and, in Year 6, outstanding.
- The high-quality provision in the Reception class has been sustained. Children quickly develop very positive attitudes to learning and make rapid progress, especially in early literacy and numeracy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 14 lessons. In addition, they observed pupils working in small groups with teachers and teaching assistants. Most of the observations were shared with the headteacher.
- Inspectors visited break times and dinner times.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, governors and staff. Inspectors spoke with separate groups of pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 as well as the school council and older pupils with special responsibilities, such as being a prefect.
- A discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documentation, including: the school's own evaluation of its performance and its improvement plan; information about pupils' progress and the support given to pupils eligible for pupil premium funding. Inspectors also looked at evidence of leaders' monitoring of teaching, and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in all year groups and heard some pupils from Year 1 read.
- This inspection was part of Ofsted's Parent View (online questionnaire) pilot for free text comments from parents and carers. The views of 42 parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were taken into account along with 19 responses to the staff questionnaire. Inspectors also spoke with some parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Cheryl Thompson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Gutmann

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is a little smaller than the average-sized primary school. It has seven classes, one in each year group, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception), where pupils attend full time.
- There are above-average proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is approximately one in 12 pupils, which is broadly average. In this school, approximately one in 10 pupils is supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. This is above average.
- In the school, approximately one fifth of the pupils are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding (disadvantaged pupils) which is broadly average. This extra funding is for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in care.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been considerable staffing changes and changes to the governing body. A new deputy headteacher, two part-time interim headteachers and two teachers started in September 2013. In September 2014, a substantive headteacher took over leadership of the school following a period of support from interim headteachers. A part time special educational needs coordinator and two newly qualified teachers were also new to the school at this time.
- The Key Stage 1 leader has responsibility for early years provision.
- The school provides a breakfast club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In Key Stage 1, improve teaching so that pupils' achievement is at least good by:
 - teachers in Years 1 and 2 having higher expectations and setting more challenging tasks that build on what pupils, particularly the most able, already know so they make more rapid progress
 - making sure pupils who find learning difficult have the right tasks, knowledgeable support and enough time to consolidate their learning before moving on to new work.
- Strengthen the impact of leaders, managers and the governing body so that improvements in Key Stage 2 are sustained and, in Key Stage 1, rapid improvements are made in teaching and pupils' achievement by:
 - providing the Key Stage 1 leader with time to check on teaching and pupils' progress
 - ensuring leaders use the findings from their observations of teaching and learning to provide staff with support and challenge so their practice improves
 - setting ambitious targets for Key Stage 1 pupils to attain by the end of Year 2 and ensuring leaders and teachers are accountable for pupils' progress towards them
 - ensure that all governors contribute to checking if pupils achieve well enough compared to pupils in schools nationally so that they can hold senior leaders to account.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior leaders have not checked rigorously on provision in Key Stage 1. The Key Stage 1 leader has not been given time to check on teaching and achievement in Years 1 and 2. Consequently, teachers and teaching assistants have not had enough guidance to ensure their practice is consistently good.
- The new headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors have identified weaknesses in Key Stage 1. However, targets set for pupils to achieve at this key stage are not challenging enough. Senior leaders have had limited time in post to implement the appropriate plans they have made for improving performance at Key Stage 1.
- The newly appointed headteacher and other senior leaders are quickening the drive for improvement at Key Stage 1. However, they are not using findings from their observations of teaching and learning well enough to guide staff to rapidly improve their practice.
- Equality of opportunity is strongly maintained. Leaders use funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively, particularly in Key Stage 2, and gaps are closing between what they and other pupils attain. Disadvantaged pupils are given opportunities to attend the school's breakfast club and benefit from individual or small-group tuition as needed.
- The curriculum and assemblies contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their understanding of responsibilities of citizens in modern British democratic society. For example, pupils visit the local council chamber and begin to gain an understanding of democracy at work.
- Action is being taken in response to the national requirement for a new assessment system to complement the new curriculum. It is too soon to evaluate the action taken.
- Sports funding is used well. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the improved range of additional sporting activities. Teachers are developing their skills by working alongside professional coaches who teach their classes. Pupils gain a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet and the need for regular exercise.
- The school's capacity for further improvement is shown by leaders' success in improving teaching and achievement in Key Stage 2. Leaders ensure the good behaviour of pupils across the school and leadership of the early years provision is outstanding.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority has provided helpful support. It has brokered the help of two interim headteachers and provided training for teachers and governors.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - All places on the governing body are not filled, so governors' extensive workload reduces the impact they can make towards school improvement.
 - A few experienced governors analyse data competently and recognise the contrast between pupils performance in Key Stage 2 and the early years provision, and current performance in Key Stage 1. Some more recently recruited governors are less secure in using performance data to compare the school's performance against all schools nationally.
 - Since the previous inspection, governors have developed their roles well under guidance from the local authority, following review of their performance and support from interim headteachers.
 - In their drive for improvement at Key Stage 2, most governors have become adept at interpreting the school's pupil progress-tracking system to question leaders and check how well pupils are achieving in the school.
 - Governors competently oversee arrangements for teachers' performance management and make sure that teachers' pay is made contingent on pupils' progress. They understand the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 and, more recently, at Key Stage 1.

- They have supported school leaders well in the past year in tackling underperformance in teaching at Key Stage 2 and are well set to do the same for Key Stage 1.
- Governors know how the pupil premium and sports funding are spent and evaluate the impact of the spending.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils themselves are good. Pupils are respectful to each other and very polite to adults, keen to talk about their work and school life.
- Discussions with several groups of pupils and individuals show that they know how they are expected to behave and enjoy doing so. Pupils say they 'come to school to learn things and have fun'.
- Older pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities such as being a prefect or school councillor. They provide good role models for the younger pupils.
- Behaviour in lessons is good and in Year 6, exemplary. Even when the work lacks challenge or explanations are confusing, pupils do their best. Older pupils relish a challenge and are keen to succeed.
- Behaviour at break times and dinner times is always good. Dinner times are friendly occasions where pupils are encouraged to develop good table manners and social skills.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school and almost all parents agree that this is the case. Access to the building is secure and staff are carefully checked prior to appointment.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying and are confident that there is no bullying or name calling in the school. They are confident that, should they have concerns, these will be dealt with quickly and to their satisfaction.
- The school has good systems for ensuring that e-safety is taught and revisited regularly. Older pupils have a good understanding of the potential dangers of personal contacts through computers and mobile phones. For example, pupils discuss very sensibly the dangers of unsolicited messages and know how to deal with these. They are also aware that sending unkind messages can do great harm.
- The school promotes good attendance regularly and effectively. Pupils are very pleased if their class wins the weekly attendance certificate. Attendance is currently above the latest published national average.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good in Key Stage 1. Teachers are not identifying what pupils already know and understand and need to learn next. As a result, the most-able pupils at Key Stage 1, in particular, are not stretched and those who struggle do not always have the right support.
- Teachers are not setting consistently high expectations and sufficiently challenging tasks to help pupils at Key Stage 1 achieve as well as they can.
- Teaching assistants are deployed to help pupils who struggle with learning at Key Stage 1. They help pupils to complete their tasks but they do not always recognise why some pupils find the learning difficult. Teachers are not picking up when these pupils lack the right tasks, the right support and the time necessary to complete the work given. When pupils have completed the work – with help – they are often

moved on to the next task which they find equally difficult and do not make good progress.

- Teaching in Key Stage 2 and in the early years provision is at least consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers set all groups of pupils challenging tasks based on a clear understanding of where the pupils are in their learning and what they need to learn next.
- In the Key Stage 2 mathematics support groups for pupils who find learning difficult, the teacher responsible for overseeing the groups accurately identifies pupils' misunderstandings. She provides varied opportunities for pupils to practise their skills, sometimes using a computer program which they enjoy.
- The effectiveness of teaching for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is generally better in Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1. The part time special educational needs coordinator ensures pupils with a statement of special educational needs have appropriate teaching, resources and support. In this she is reasonably successful.
- Teaching for the most-able pupils is at least good in Year 6. Expectations are set high for these pupils and challenging tasks make them think hard, especially in mathematics. Many Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve results in mathematics expected of pupils two or three year older.
- Teachers give Key Stage 2 pupils clear attainment targets and monitor progress towards these. Pupils take pride in accomplishing defined steps towards their targets. Teachers mark pupils' work well and give them guidance for improvement. Pupils are keen to use their 'purple polishing pens' to show they have responded to teachers' marking.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils do not make enough progress in Key Stage 1. However, they enter Year 1 having achieved exceptionally well in Reception.
- Progress slows in Years 1 and 2. Attainment at the end of Year 2 in national teacher assessments is broadly average. However, pupils achieve very well in the Year 1 phonics (sounds and the letters they represent) national screening check, mainly because they have learned so well in the Reception class. For example, two thirds of the children achieved the expected standard for Year 1 in their Reception Year.
- In both key stages, pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well. They attain higher standards than their classmates and make at least expected progress.
- Younger disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs often receive additional support in lessons. This support is not always carefully tailored to what pupils know, understand and need to learn next. Consequently, they do not make good progress.
- In Key Stage 2, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. Support for them is very well structured and pupils have the right work and help for them to make good progress and develop self-esteem.
- The gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates have closed since 2013 when Year 6 pupils were behind by over two years in reading and writing and by almost three years in mathematics. Compared to all pupils nationally, they were behind by six terms in reading and by five in writing and mathematics.
- Gaps in attainment between Year 6 disadvantaged pupils and their classmates reduced in 2014 with the improvements in all pupils' progress and attainment in Key Stage 2. Disadvantaged pupils were then just over three terms behind their classmates in reading and mathematics and almost two terms behind in writing. All Year 6 disadvantaged pupils made at least expected progress in 2014. Inspection findings indicate disadvantaged pupils are currently progressing well in Key Stage 2.

- In Key Stage 2 overall, pupils are making good progress. School data analysing pupils' progress and attainment show that current Year 6 pupils are on track to attain above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the year. Their progress since the start of Year 5 has been rapid. In Years 3 and 4, pupils' work and inspectors' findings indicate good progress. In response to strong challenge in lessons, the progress of Year 3 pupils is accelerating and they are making up for slower learning in the past.
- In 2014, 27 of the 28 pupils in Year 6 made at least expected progress in writing and mathematics and 26 of the 28 in reading. Most made good progress, including disabled pupils and those who had special educational needs.
- The most-able pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress, particularly in mathematics, and attain above-average standards. In Key Stage 1, the most able are not making enough progress because teachers do not set them challenging work to ensure they achieve as well as they can.

The early years provision is outstanding

- Success in Reception is due to expert teaching and close attention to how children learn. Staff work as a highly effective team under excellent leadership. The teacher and well-trained staff check constantly on children's learning and take every opportunity to extend this.
- Children start Reception with skills that are close to those typical for their age. Currently, approximately one quarter of the pupils are already exceeding the levels typical for their age.
- Children make rapid progress in learning early literacy and numeracy skills. When they enter Year 1, their levels of attainment are above average and they are very positive about learning.
- Strong relationships are developed with parents through home visits before children join the class. Children and their parents can spend an hour in the classroom every day after school has finished during the latter summer term. As a result, children settle to full-time school quickly because they are very familiar with the classroom, staff and teacher.
- Exceptionally high expectations are set for children to develop good learning habits and social skills. Their behaviour is excellent. There is silence when the teacher talks and they listen attentively. When they speak, they are encouraged to speak up and share their response.
- Early literacy and numeracy skills are taught exceptionally well. Children make rapid progress. On entry, very few recognise letters and the sounds they make or how to write them. Inspectors observed that children had already learned many letter sounds and used them to spell. Children spelled simple words with confidence.
- Children's past work confirms rapid progress. By the end of the year they were writing short stories with correct spelling and some, with basic punctuation, the level expected of older pupils.
- Children make equally rapid progress in numeracy. The children observed have already learned to count to 10 and beyond and can recognise seven being more than three. Through excellent teaching they have already made a good start on understanding 'number sentences' such as $1 + 3 = 4$.

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

Unique reference number	115192
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	442025

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeremy Milligan
Headteacher	Linda McSweeney
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2013
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