

St Pancras Catholic Primary School

De Montfort Road, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1SR

Inspection dates

16–17 January 2018

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	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The new headteacher is determined that all pupils at St Pancras receive a top-quality education. She works tirelessly to ensure that this happens.
- As a result of strong leadership, pupils are now making rapid progress in reading and writing. However, pupils' progress in mathematics, especially in key stage 2, is too slow.
- Teachers know their pupils well. Relationships are positive. Pupils thrive as members of this caring, friendly school.
- Governors are effective in their role. They support and challenge leaders well. Governors understand that standards in mathematics are not yet high enough.
- Subject leaders benefit from high-quality training and support to carry out their roles effectively.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They use this well to plan interesting tasks for pupils. Sometimes, however, the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, find tasks in mathematics too easy, particularly in key stage 2.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the early years get off to a flying start. They make rapid progress. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception has been consistently higher than that seen nationally for a number of years.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils enjoy the topics and themes they cover. The curriculum is further enriched through visits and trips to local places of cultural and historical interest.
- Although most pupils attend regularly and enjoy school, the attendance of a small minority of pupils, including some disadvantaged pupils, is below average.
- Parents are very positive about the education their children receive and recognise the many improvements that have taken place
- Pupils are both polite and helpful. They enjoy taking on roles and responsibilities. They treat everyone with respect and courtesy.
- Leaders are rigorous in ensuring that no stone is left unturned in the interests of supporting and protecting all pupils in their care.
- Although gaps between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and others remain, these are closing more rapidly in reading and writing than in mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics, particularly in key stage 2, by ensuring that:
 - teachers plan tasks that are suitably challenging, particularly for the most able pupils
 - pupils who have fallen behind are supported more closely to catch up quickly
 - the checks that leaders make on teaching focus more precisely on the progress made by different groups of pupils, especially the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve pupils' attendance by ensuring that the minority of pupils who are absent too often attend school regularly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has taken prompt and precise action to improve previous weaknesses in teaching. She has not shied away from difficult decisions and has accepted no excuses when trying to achieve the best for the pupils in her care. As a result, the leadership of teaching is strong and, despite changes to staffing, good teaching over time has been maintained.
- Leaders know the local community and the pupils they serve very well. Leaders take every step possible to ensure that pupils are safe, stay fit and healthy and that they are ready to learn. Parents are highly positive about the school. As one parent said, 'I have never seen a school where the children are so keen to get to class in the morning.'
- The curriculum is interesting for pupils, who study a wide range of subjects. Through topics and themes such as 'The Battle of Lewes', pupils are able to explore their local community and environment. This helps pupils to understand better the world they live in. Pupils have good opportunities to engage in extra-curricular activities, visits and trips.
- Staff enjoy working at this school. They are very clear that it has improved since the last inspection. They appreciate the support that they receive from the headteacher and say this supports their well-being.
- The newly appointed SEN leader is already having a positive impact. Pupils' needs are identified swiftly. Leaders have established good partnerships with parents and other agencies and this is making a difference. As one parent said, 'Teachers at St Pancras are always willing to listen, to discuss, and to help resolve any issues that arise.'
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural behaviour well. Pupils have a strong sense of moral purpose. For example, at the time of the inspection, the school eco-council was planning a jumble sale to fund the purchase of recycling bins and so reduce litter in their local community. Regular 'reward' assemblies provide opportunities for pupils to celebrate their success in 'doing the right thing'.
- Sport funding is spent appropriately to increase pupils' participation in extra-curricular activities and competitive sport. As a result of high-quality teaching, the school recently won the 'small schools district sports trophy', an achievement of which pupils are rightly proud.
- Pupil premium funding is spent effectively to support disadvantaged pupils to make at least the same progress as other pupils in the school. Nevertheless, disadvantaged pupils, especially the most able, are not yet making rapid enough progress in mathematics.
- The leader for mathematics and English is new to role and benefiting from appropriate training and support. Pupils across the school are making good progress in reading and writing. However, work to raise standards in mathematics in key stage 2 is at an early stage.
- Leaders' self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate. However, the focus on improving pupils' achievement lacks rigour in mathematics. Leaders' checks on

teaching in mathematics do not focus sharply enough on the progress of different groups of pupils. Pupils in key stage 2 are not yet making the same good progress in this subject as they make in reading and writing.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a clear focus on improving outcomes for pupils. They strive to ensure that pupils leave the school with the skills they need to succeed in the next stage of their education.
- Governors have a wide range of helpful skills and knowledge. They use these well to support and challenge leaders, and do so effectively.
- Governors ensure that they receive detailed information about the school's use of pupil premium and physical education and sport premium funding. They understand the difference this extra funding makes to pupils' learning and progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school keeps accurate records. Reviews, policies and procedures are followed with rigour. The single central record meets requirements. Leaders' work with parents and with other agencies is timely and effective.
- Staff receive regular and appropriate training. They understand fully their responsibilities to ensure that pupils remain safe at school. Systems in place for reporting any concerns are transparent.
- Pupils said they feel safe in school and are well supported and their parents agree. Pupils have frequent opportunities to learn about staying safe, for example, when riding their bikes to school and when accessing the internet.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers know their pupils well. They use their good subject knowledge to plan interesting tasks and activities for pupils. As a result, pupils are encouraged to work hard and to be successful. Pupils who spoke to the inspector described learning as 'fun and exciting'.
- Teachers use assessment information to ensure that work is set at just the right level, particularly in key stage 1. Teachers ask questions which challenge pupils to think. Pupils respond enthusiastically and retain focus throughout all lessons.
- Teaching assistants support disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities well. This helps pupils to access tasks and to make good progress alongside other pupils.
- Feedback from teachers helps pupils to know how to improve their work. Pupils take special care to follow the advice they are given. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- The teaching of English, including early reading skills, is effective. This is because

pupils have frequent opportunities to use and apply their reading and writing skills in subjects other than English. In a recent history topic, key stage 1 pupils used their reading research skills to develop their understanding of life in ancient Britain. In key stage 2, pupils used their knowledge of geography to help them to understand migrant and refugee passages to Europe.

- Pupils are encouraged to extend their learning at home. Pupils said they enjoy the tasks they receive, taking great pride in their efforts. Parents are positive about their children's homework. Most parents who completed the Parent View survey said that their children are taught well at school.
- The teaching of mathematics is highly effective in the early years and is improving rapidly in key stage 1. Nevertheless, in key stage 2, tasks for pupils are sometimes too easy. This is especially the case for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. The teaching of mathematics in key stage 2 is not yet enabling pupils who have fallen behind to catch up quickly.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils understand what bullying is but said it hardly ever happens. They know whom to talk to if they have any concerns.
- The benefits of living in a diverse community are promoted well. For example, on 'odd socks day', pupils wear odd socks to school to celebrate differences. Such activities help pupils to understand the benefits of living in a diverse society where everyone is welcomed and included.
- Assemblies focus on the importance of striving to 'be the best you can be'. Pupils' responses to this message are positive. They work hard in lessons and readily take on additional roles and responsibilities in school.
- Pupils take part in regular sport and exercise. They said keeping fit and healthy is both important and fun. Pupils like taking part in team sports in 'the paddock' and going to extra-curricular clubs such as dance and yoga.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. They listen carefully to their teachers and follow all instructions without making a fuss.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils work well together in class and take care to ensure that their written work in English and mathematics is neat and tidy. All lessons proceed in a calm and orderly fashion. Pupils respond well to praise and are proud of their achievements.
- Pupils move around the school quietly so as not to disturb others. They are polite and friendly to visitors and display excellent manners.

- Breaktimes and lunchtimes are happy and peaceful events. 'Buddies' and 'worry warriors' look out carefully to ensure that everyone has a friend to play with.
- Staff and pupils all said that behaviour is managed well, and parents agreed. One parent said: 'For me the selling point of St Pancras School is the wonderful nurturing environment which is always evident and how this encourages the children to be caring to one another. My child is valued as an individual and feels happy and confident.'
- Leaders are consistent in promoting the importance of good attendance and punctuality. While attendance is monitored carefully and is improving, a small but persistent minority of pupils do not attend regularly enough. This includes some disadvantaged pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Children in the early years make rapid progress from their starting points. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development is above that seen nationally.
- Pupils continue to achieve well as they progress through key stage 1. In 2017, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was above that seen nationally. Pupils commented readily on how much they enjoy these subjects.
- Work in pupils' books in key stage 2 shows that current pupils are making rapid progress in reading and writing and generally good progress in mathematics. This is because of the good help and advice that they receive in class and in small groups.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities receive good support with their learning and are making good progress. Current progress for disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, is similar to their peers in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Outcomes in the national phonics screening check in Year 1 dipped below national results in 2017. However, Year 2 pupils, who did not achieve the expected standard, are now making rapid progress. This is because of the good-quality teaching they receive.
- Pupils' progress by the end of Year 6 is inconsistent, particularly in mathematics. Progress in key stage 2 is still too slow for some groups, including pupils who need to catch up.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- The leadership and management of the early years is outstanding. The early years leader reviews her practice regularly and effectively. Consequently, the quality of teaching remains consistently high. Visits to other schools locally in order to check on standards of learning are used very well. The early years leader makes excellent use of these opportunities to explore new ideas to help children to make even better progress. As a result, standards are high.
- Most children start their Reception Year with skills and knowledge which are broadly

typical for their age although some are at a lower stage of development. Children settle quickly to the routines of the school and make excellent progress in all areas of learning. By the end of Reception, children are fully equipped to make a confident start to Year 1.

- Staff work closely with parents and with local nursery providers to ensure that early assessment information is accurate. Careful records of children's progress throughout their time in Reception are maintained. Information is shared regularly with parents and carers to make sure that they know how well their children are learning and how to support them at home.
- The curriculum is extremely well planned and holds high appeal for children. All activities are carefully selected to help children to develop their early reading, writing and mathematics skills well. Children were keen to show the inspector what they had learned about life in Mexico. They were especially proud of the stories they wrote about volcanoes.
- The teaching of phonics in Reception Year, including by teaching assistants, supports children's development in reading and writing very effectively. Disadvantaged children make rapid progress because of the excellent additional support they receive.
- Children enjoy finding things out for themselves. The most able children have frequent opportunities to extend their learning and to develop their own ideas. The very wide range of resources both in the classroom and in the outside spaces provides children with rich opportunities to select their own activities.
- Behaviour and safety take top priority in the early years. Adults make sure that children know, understand and follow the rules. Children are cheerful and cooperative. They take turns happily when asked to share equipment. Children help tidy up resources without a fuss. As a result, there is a strong sense of purpose and children feel secure.

School details

Unique reference number	114568
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10037818

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Liam McIlvenny
Headteacher	Michelle Lord
Telephone number	01273 473017
Website	www.st-pancras.e-sussex.sch.uk
Email address	office@st-pancras.e-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–27 June 2013

Information about this school

- St Pancras Catholic Primary school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The headteacher was appointed in July 2017 and was previously acting headteacher from September 2015. There have been significant changes to staffing since the last school inspection. Most of the teaching staff are recently appointed.
- Children from the Reception Year to Year 6 are mainly taught in mixed-age classes. There are five classes in total. Pupils in Year 3 are taught in a single-age class.
- The vast majority of children are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is also above the national average.
- The school meets current government floor standards, which set minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils in reading, writing and

mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in a number of lessons and learning walks. All classes were visited at least once. All observations were undertaken jointly with school leaders.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders, groups of pupils, representatives from the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- A wide range of school documentation was scrutinised. This included the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, attendance records and information relating to the pupil premium and sport premium. The inspector also looked at safeguarding documentation.
- The inspector looked at pupils' written work in all curriculum subjects.
- A number of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils read to the inspector.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour and conduct in lessons, during breaktime and lunchtime, and when they were moving around the school.
- Account was taken of the 54 responses to the Ofsted online Parent View survey. The inspector also spoke to parents at the end of the school day.
- The inspector took account of 13 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Judith O'Hare, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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