

# St Pius X Catholic Primary School

Tennyson Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 4HY

## Inspection dates

11–12 October 2016

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- St Pius X Catholic Primary has improved significantly since the previous inspection, in all aspects of the school's provision, particularly the outstanding personal development, behaviour and welfare, and early years provision.
- The determined drive of the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, other staff and governors, enables the school to continue to develop at a good pace.
- The headteacher and staff see keeping pupils safe as being of paramount importance.
- Governors are effective. They are better organised than at the time of the previous inspection. In particular, they check pupils' progress more thoroughly.
- The skilled English and mathematics subject leaders drive improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in these subjects. However, leaders of other subjects do not check standards in their subjects.
- Staff form an effective team. Since the previous inspection, teachers and teaching assistants have benefited from good-quality training and working with staff in successful schools.
- Pupils take great pride in their appearance, the presentation of their work and their behaviour.
- Pupils want to learn; they come to school keen to see what new learning lies in store for them. They try hard, do as they are asked and see their mistakes as opportunities to improve.
- Children make an excellent start in Reception because provision is outstanding. They make very rapid progress. As a result, they are very well prepared for Year 1.
- When attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is measured at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, it is above the national average.
- Pupils generally make good progress as they move through the school. However, work set for the most able pupils, including those who are also disadvantaged, is not sufficiently challenging in some classes and subjects.
- Parents are positive. Those spoken to were full of praise for the improvements since the headteacher arrived. The vast majority would recommend the school to another parent.

## **Full report**

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

- Ensure that the learning for the most able pupils, including those who are also disadvantaged, is challenging enough to enable them to reach their full potential.
- Develop the leadership of subjects other than English and mathematics to ensure that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are as good as those in reading, writing and mathematics.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher's tenacious determination has driven many school improvements, notably in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements. Other school leaders, governors and staff share her resolve to see the school continue to progress. Every member of staff responding to their online survey agrees the school has improved since it was previously inspected.
- The school's culture is aspirational. School leaders set high expectations for everyone, and lead by example. One parent summed up parents' views in saying: 'Since the head arrived we've all had to pull our socks up; staff, parents and children! Take school uniform, she doesn't compromise.'
- The school's image has improved. Governors said: 'From the moment pupils arrive, they see displays of their best work. The headteacher has changed how things are done; pupils arrive on time, they are proud of themselves and aim to do their best.'
- St Pius X Primary School is a fully inclusive school where all pupils are welcomed into the school family. As a result, they settle quickly and thrive.
- School leaders' clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas to improve ensures that energy and resources are targeted in the right areas.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher form an effective team. They use their differing skills well, share ideas and come to decisions beneficial to the school.
- School leaders accurately analyse information about pupils' progress. This enables them, for example, to identify pupils who need to catch up, and see that they have extra help. They check that extra help is making a difference and, if it is not, they will adjust it.
- English and mathematics subject leaders' impact on teaching and pupils' achievements is strong. Both are skilled teachers able to train other staff successfully. Leadership of other subjects, however, is in its infancy.
- Staff morale is high. All responding to their online survey say they are proud to be a member of staff, that they are treated fairly and with respect, and that leaders are considerate of their well-being. They agree leaders do all they can to ensure that staff are motivated, respected and effective.
- Teaching assistants are an effective team. They are well trained in the extra courses used to help pupils who need to catch up, or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, these pupils do well.
- Pupils say the curriculum is 'fun and interesting', especially events such as Maths Week, when they are challenged to apply their skills to solve out-of-the-ordinary problems. Learning is supported by a good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. Pupils clearly understand their rights and responsibilities to the school community and beyond.
- Pupils' understanding of British values is clear. They understand democracy because they see it in action. For example, they raised the issue of a damaged playground directly with governors, and appreciated that governors listened and acted.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is managed well, including provision for those with statements of special educational needs or

education, health and care plans. These pupils all receive help matched to their separate needs.

- Provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language is good. Right from Reception, children thrive in a language-rich environment.
- Pupil premium funding is generally used effectively. Pupils who need to catch up receive extra help and do well. The most able pupils academically, and those showing particular skills, for example in physical education, are recognised, but as yet they receive little extra provision.
- Additional primary school physical education and sports funding is used well. The wider range of activities and games enthuses pupils. Pupils understand the part exercise can play in a healthy lifestyle. Pupils responding to their online survey all agreed that their school encourages them to look after their physical health.
- The local authority support is effective. Links with other schools are encouraged. Initially, St Pius X staff benefited greatly from these opportunities. More recently they have begun to help others, for example to improve other schools' early years provision.
- The relationship with parents is strong. The vast majority responding to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, say they would recommend the school to another parent.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governance is effective.
- A recent local authority review recognised that the improvements made over the last two years mean that the governors, as a group, are cohesive and effective.
- The school's information about pupils' progress is used effectively by governors. Other sources are used well to check and triangulate information to make sure it is consistent, and to question leaders if it is not. Governors also make comparisons with other schools nationally, which is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- Regular visits to the school enable governors to form an independent view of the school's effectiveness, and have greater insight into how the school functions.
- Governors make spending decisions firmly rooted in the best interests of the pupils. They check that additional funding, such as pupil premium, is used effectively. For example, they monitor the impact of any extra help provided to pupils, to see if it is making the expected improvement.
- Governors oversee the performance of staff, including the headteacher, rigorously to check targets are met.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders and governors set an excellent example; through their own actions they demonstrate that they give safeguarding high priority.
- The headteacher's constant vigilance ensures that everyone plays their part in keeping pupils safe. She is tenacious if she feels any pupil is at any risk.
- Staff and governors receive regular training and updates. This helps ensure that awareness levels remain high.
- Training includes aspects of safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. As a result, staff know what to look for in order to detect pupils who are potentially vulnerable.
- Staff say they are confident in raising any concerns with the designated lead for

safeguarding. Systems and procedures are effective in recording and noting concerns.

- The overwhelming majority of parents responding to their online survey strongly agree their children are safe in school.
- The school swiftly involves outside agencies should action be needed to address any concerns or seek help to support vulnerable families.
- Documentation is comprehensive and detailed. Checks on the suitability of staff, governors, regular volunteers and contractors are thorough.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. In particular, checks on teaching are used much more effectively to identify areas for improvement. These in turn lead to suitable training and further checks, to see that improvements are made and sustained.
- Staff collaborate well to share ideas and help one another improve. They are confident about asking for advice and respond positively to any suggestions given. They fully recognise the importance of training. All staff responding to their online survey agree they are trusted to take risks and innovate in ways that are right for pupils.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong. As a result, lessons run smoothly. Pupils responding to their online survey all said that their teachers make sure they understand things.
- Pupils regularly use a range of good-quality resources to aid their learning. They know what to do if they are stuck, for example they refer to information and prompts on display to support their learning.
- Clear lesson planning generally ensures that time in class is spent effectively. As a result, work undertaken by most pupils is at the right level of difficulty. However, some tasks for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, do not provide sufficient challenge.
- Staff effectively guide pupils to reflect on the progress they have made, skills and knowledge they have mastered and the next steps for their learning to progress.
- Teachers deploy teaching assistants effectively. Teaching assistants are skilled, confident and well prepared. They know what they are to do, and the intended outcome. As a result, their contribution to learning is effective.
- Staff promote pupils' speaking and listening skills well. The school has recognised that, year-on-year, a growing proportion of pupils are entering the school with lower communication skills. Lessons regularly provide opportunities for pupils to practise these skills because teachers encourage pupils to speak in full, well-constructed sentences.
- Reading skills are taught well. Although early in the term, excellent teaching means that Reception children have already mastered many letter sounds. In the recent past, many Reception children have reached the standard expected by the end of Year 1. This very good start is built on well for the majority of pupils. The school recognises, and is addressing, the lack of suitable reading material for the most able pupils.
- The teaching of writing is good. Pupils say they enjoy writing and the opportunities the different subjects give them to write in a range of styles.

- The teaching of mathematics is improving. Clear analysis of pupils' outcomes has shown that reasoning and problem-solving skills are less developed. Staff training and more careful lesson planning, to include more opportunities, have quickly led to improvement. This is an example of effective leadership.
- Homework is used effectively. Some tasks involve practising basic skills; others encourage pupils to pursue their interests.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Every parent responding to the question on Parent View agrees that their children are happy at school. Pupils responding to their online survey agree that they enjoy school.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes are of great benefit to their learning. They want to learn, and are highly motivated. They have a very strong work ethic. When stuck, they know what to do. They are keen to learn from their mistakes.
- Pupils' highly motivated attitudes stem partly from their clear understanding of the importance of a good education to their future lives.
- Pupils who struggle to learn are as positive about school as those who do not. This is largely because their teachers' feedback enables them to see clearly the improvements they are making, and this motivates them further.
- Pupils say they enjoy talking to the headteacher about their school work at 'afternoon tea'. The headteacher in turn gleans valuable information about pupils' perceptions of school and their learning.
- Pupils welcome opportunities to take responsibility. For example, some train as play leaders to help younger pupils at playtimes. Helping one another comes naturally to pupils. The sense of community is very strong. For example, pupils enjoy opportunities to present their views to governors.
- Pupils and parents say the school has a strong sense of community. They describe the 'family feel' where everyone knows and looks after one another. Pupils from ethnic minority groups feel welcome and quickly become engrossed in all aspects of school life. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well cared for.
- Pupils' well-being is given high priority. Pupils know that exercise, rest and a balanced diet are some important factors of a healthy lifestyle. A well-being mentor gives vulnerable pupils guidance and help. She works closely with the inclusion manager. Together they regularly check that these pupils flourish.
- Pupils' good understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet is the result of regular reminders in lessons. They use equipment safely and have a good awareness of general safety, including around the home and on the road. They look out for one another, particularly those younger than themselves or new to the school.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The good behaviour reported at the previous inspection has been improved further.
- A very high proportion of parents responding to Parent View agree that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved. Parents expressing a view also agree that the

school deals effectively with bullying.

- All staff responding to their online survey agree that the school has a culture that encourages calm and orderly conduct. Right from Reception, children quickly learn the school's strong values that promote good behaviour.
- Pupils respond very positively to rewards and praise. They have a strong moral code, with a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong.
- Pupils work and play together very harmoniously. They mix well; playtimes are very pleasant recreational breaks between lessons.
- Pupils move around the school building very sensibly and safely. They have very good manners and are very respectful towards adults.
- Pupils confirm that they feel very safe in school. They say bullying is very rare but, if it happens, staff resolve it quickly. They are confident that, if they were worried, there are staff they could turn to who would resolve their problems quickly.
- Attendance, including that of disadvantaged pupils, is well above the national average. It has improved further since the previous inspection, when it was also above the national figure. The attendance of the very few pupils regularly absent is improving because the school works closely with these families and outside agencies. A high-quality breakfast club contributes to the good attendance and punctuality.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection. In particular, pupils in Years 1 and 2 make more rapid progress. The school ensures that pupils who need to catch up have the right extra help so they do so.
- All staff responding to their online survey agree pupils are challenged to make at least good progress. Nine in 10 parents responding to Parent View agree that their children make good progress at the school. Pupils, in their online survey, all agree that teachers help them to do their best. Inspection evidence agrees with these views.
- The school's checks on progress, and the quality of work in pupils' books from this year and last year, show that the vast majority of pupils now make good or better progress.
- Children make outstanding progress in the Reception class. From starting points that are generally typical of those usually expected for four-year-olds, the vast majority reach a good level of development by the end of the year in readiness for transition into Year 1.
- Results of the Year 1 phonics screening check have also been above the national average. School checks and inspection evidence suggest that pupils' results are likely to be similarly high again in 2017 if they maintain the excellent rate of progress begun in Reception.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is good overall. Since the previous inspection, attainment by the end of Year 2 has improved. As this works its way through the school, standards in Years 3 to 6 are also improving further.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics is above average and pupils make good progress in these subjects overall from Year 3 to Year 6.
- Pupils from ethnic minority groups, and those who speak English as an additional language, make equally good progress. These pupils are made welcome, so they settle

quickly and thrive.

- Disadvantaged pupils generally make good progress. The school effectively supports those with gaps in their learning, or who need to catch up. While the school identifies those most able academically, or with a particular talent for one or more subjects, provision does not yet fully meet their needs.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their differing starting points. These pupils receive extra help tailored to their needs.
- While the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, often make good progress, many of these pupils are capable of more. The work set for some of them has not been sufficiently demanding to enable them to reach their potential.

### Early years provision

### Outstanding

- The early years provision, judged outstanding at the previous inspection, has gone from strength to strength.
- Children settle quickly so each day gets off to a brisk start. Although still relatively early in the term, children know what to expect, and what is expected of them.
- Children are very keen and inquisitive; their thirst for learning is unabated whatever activity they are given or choose. They soak up learning.
- Most children read well. They use their phonics knowledge if they meet unknown words. They use a good range of vocabulary to write. Handwriting demonstrates well-formed, evenly sized letters. Children add numbers confidently.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their differing starting points. They are well cared for so they succeed and flourish.
- Transition is outstanding. In the term before they start, most children and their parents spend regular time in Reception. Staff get to know the children and their interests. Children build their confidence. Staff use this information when planning activities for the children so they 'hit the ground running' when they join Reception.
- Every activity is carefully planned to give children a very wide range of stimulating experiences. Children's attention and curiosity are aroused, and they are keen to learn more. Adults listen to children and respond well to their questions and requests.
- Children work and play together well. They take turns and cooperate, helping one another without being asked.
- Relationships between staff and children are equally strong. Children listen to, and follow, instructions. They want to please staff and do the right thing.
- Staff work well together. They form a cohesive team. Everyone is involved in planning so their ideas are incorporated and they all know the objective for each child.
- Indoors and out, children enjoy a rich and stimulating environment full of opportunities to learn and play. Staff take every opportunity to promote basic skills, such as letter sounds and numbers.
- The outstanding progress and achievement is built on an accurate check of each child's understanding. Most importantly, this identifies the precise next step in their learning so suitable tasks can be planned and taught. This benefits all children, including those beginning to learn English.

- Staff's constant vigilance ensures that children are safe. For example, the outside area is regularly checked. In teaching, every opportunity is taken to remind children of the safe use of equipment. Children themselves have a good and growing sense of how to stay safe.
- The relationship with parents is very strong. Parents are fully involved and can contribute 'Wow!' moments to children's learning journeys, which are the record of their year in Reception. Parents say the information sessions, such as phonics, are very useful in helping them support their children's learning at home.

## School details

Unique reference number	115192
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10019597

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	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeremy Milligan
Headteacher	Linda McSweeney
Telephone number	01245 354 875
Website	<a href="http://www.stpiusxchelmsford.co.uk">www.stpiusxchelmsford.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@st-piusx.essex.sch.uk">admin@st-piusx.essex.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	16–17 October 2014

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- There is one class in each year group.
- Approximately two thirds of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Pupils from any other White background or of Indian or African heritage form the next largest groups.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is below average.
- The overall proportion of pupils who receive support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs, or an education, health and care plan, is double the national average.

- In 2015, the school met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school operates a breakfast club, five days a week.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited all classrooms. Some visits were conducted jointly with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspectors observed small groups of pupils being taught.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors observed pupils in other activities and as they moved around the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other leaders, teachers, other staff and governors. Inspectors also met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors met with pupils to discuss their experiences at school.
- The views of 37 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account. The inspectors also held informal discussions with parents. The inspectors considered the views of 19 members of staff and 40 pupils who responded to their online surveys.
- The inspectors looked at a range of school documents and information. These included the school's development plan, checks on the quality of teaching, curriculum plans, minutes of meetings of the governing body and pupils' behaviour and attendance records. The inspectors also looked at arrangements for and records of safeguarding procedures.

## Inspection team

Robert Greatrex, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lynn Lowery	Ofsted Inspector

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