

# St Aidan's Catholic Primary Academy

Benton Road, Ilford, Essex IG1 4AS

## Inspection dates

12–13 December 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Senior leaders' and governors' planned strategies have not improved the quality of the curriculum, teaching or pupils' achievement quickly enough in the past.
- Turbulence in staffing has had a negative impact on the quality of teaching over time, which has not been focused on ensuring that all pupils learn as well as they can.
- The achievement of pupils as they move up through the year groups is variable because the quality of teaching is not consistently good across the school, including in early years.
- Assessment information has not been used effectively to inform teaching, so that activities meet the needs of all pupils, including for children in early years.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders across the school are now taking more effective steps to improve the quality of the curriculum, teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good in and around school. They are considerate of the needs of others, welcoming and keen to learn.
- Attendance has risen and is now in line with the national average.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills very well. This is helping pupils to become responsible citizens in modern Britain.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, are well cared for, and say that they feel safe at school.

## Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, by:
  - making sure that teaching is consistently good or better across all year groups and in all subjects, including in early years
  - providing further opportunities to strengthen the leadership capacity across the school
  - ensuring that the good teaching practice that exists at the school is shared with all teachers.
- Improve teaching and learning across all key stages, so that pupils achieve as well as they can, by ensuring that teachers use assessment information to:
  - address pupils' misconceptions swiftly in lessons
  - ensure that activities sufficiently challenge pupils and can be adapted to meet individual learning needs.
- Improve the effectiveness of the early years provision, by ensuring that:
  - assessments clearly identify whether children's skills are in line with those typical for children of their age
  - adults consistently use assessment information to ensure that their interactions with children, including their use of language, support children in exploring their ideas while practising their developing skills.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The way the senior leadership team monitors and evaluates teaching has not led to rapid enough improvement in the past. In the summer term, at the last monitoring inspection, senior leaders' self-evaluation of the school was overly positive. Leaders were slow to implement some of the key actions identified to improve the effectiveness of provision, particularly in early years. Leaders were slow in implementing an external review of the school's use of the pupil premium.
- Turbulence in staffing has had a negative impact on the quality of teaching over time. Senior leaders have thought carefully about how to ensure that staff turnover is reduced and that good teachers have a chance to accept greater responsibility within the school, for example through the recently introduced phase leadership posts and good professional development opportunities for subject leaders, including the opportunity to work alongside specialist advisers.
- Since the last inspection, good support from the local authority and diocese, and the links made with the executive headteacher's base school, have helped develop leadership potential at the school. As a result, middle leaders are now instrumental in contributing to the many improvements being implemented. They model lessons, teach alongside colleagues and organise further training and support linked to individuals' development needs. This is helping to ensure that newly qualified and developing teachers are supported to improve as quickly as possible. As a result, no inadequate teaching remains.
- Over the last 12 months, improvements are evident wherever there has been a specific focus and impetus for improvement, increasingly led by subject leaders. The school is improving quickly and securely across several aspects of its work, notably in the setting up of whole-school systems for planning, monitoring and review, the setting of clear professional expectations for staff, the teaching of reading, and the work done on promoting safety. A strong example of this is the school's safeguarding practices, which are robust and secure.
- The school's curriculum is now suitably broad and balanced. This term, swimming was introduced for pupils in Year 4 and Year 5. Good links are planned between subjects that give pupils opportunities to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is beginning to have an impact on progress for these pupils across the school. Focused monitoring, alongside teachers being held to account for groups of learners, is leading to improved progress for the school's most vulnerable pupils.
- Effective use is made of the additional funding for physical education (PE) and sport. Pupils attend a range of additional activities, including lunchtime and after-school sports clubs. Teachers' skills and confidence are being supported and developed through a coaching programme to deliver core physical education.
- The promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is strong. School displays demonstrate the values that underpin all aspects of learning, which helps ensure that pupils are prepared effectively to be caring and responsible citizens of the

future. Other cultures and faiths are explored throughout the year to support the pupils' awareness of the diversity of modern Britain. Pupils understand democracy and are encouraged to discuss and reflect on rights, responsibilities and respect for all, regardless of their differences.

## **Governance of the school**

- Since the previous monitoring inspection, those responsible for governance have ensured a new sense of urgency prevails. Members of the previous interim executive board and the new interim trust board are holding leaders to account for the timeliness of actions. The school's pupil premium and PE and sport funding reviews, and the associated plans for action, are in place and available on the school's website.
- Those responsible for governance are proud of their school and are ambitious for its future success. Board members are dedicated to procuring resources to secure improvement, for example by securing expertise and funding to improve the effectiveness within the early years provision or in developing the capacity for leadership across the school.
- The new interim trust board has started to scrutinise information provided by the school. The board members have ensured a range of expertise is in place with the appointment of key management posts, including a chief accounting officer with expertise in primary leadership. This is providing leaders with greater support and challenge as the executive headteacher leaves in December and the interim head of school and his leadership team take over.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Systems have been completely overhauled since the previous inspection and leaders have ensured that keeping pupils safe now lies at the heart of the school's work.
- Leaders, including those responsible for governance, carry out checks on the school's safeguarding records to ensure that they meet government requirements for keeping children safe. Any issues are dealt with swiftly by the school. Where necessary, leaders ensure that families receive early and effective support.
- Staff, and those responsible for governance, receive appropriate training in all aspects of safeguarding. Staff are alert to potential concerns and understand the process for sharing information. Pupils feel safe at school and know that they will be listened to if they have any worries.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Requires improvement**

- Despite some good teaching practices seen, the quality of teaching is not always good enough and requires improvement to be consistently good or better across the school. Teachers do not consistently provide learning that is matched to pupils' needs. For example, in lessons, some teachers do not address pupils' misconceptions swiftly, or expect enough of pupils, which weakens pupils' progress.

- Support for, and consistency in, planning across each year group, particularly in mathematics and literacy, are improving teachers' subject knowledge and expectations of what pupils should be able to do in their year group. However, the execution of these plans can be overly formulaic. Some teachers do not adapt their plans to meet pupils' changing needs, or re-shape tasks and explanations during lessons to help pupils' understanding.
- Teachers do not always explain clearly what they expect pupils to be able to do by the end of an activity. Success criteria, learning intentions and activities sometimes lack clarity or are confusing. For example, in Year 2, when learning about natural and man-made objects, or in Year 1, when learning about writing a letter, the success criteria and activity hindered pupils' understanding, which limited pupils' progress.
- Pupils' books show that inconsistencies remain in the application of the school's marking and feedback policy.
- Leaders across the school are now taking more effective steps to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including securing stability of staffing with permanent class teacher appointments.
- Teaching is improving swiftly because leaders have established more consistent expectations for classroom practice, and systems are in place for the performance management of staff and the correct identification of good practice.
- Some adults have particularly strong knowledge in their areas of expertise. Where practice is good, teachers are using this knowledge to plan interesting and thought-provoking activities. They use their knowledge of pupils' current understanding to challenge their thinking and ideas. In these lessons, pupils make stronger progress. For example, during a science lesson, Year 6 pupils could share their knowledge of currents and electrical circuits, using the correct scientific language. As the teacher introduced increasingly challenging scenarios, pupils were able to talk about their reasons as to whether a current would flow across various circuits or not. The teacher used probing questioning skilfully to facilitate further pupil discussions. As a result, they were able to self-correct misconceptions, giving the reasons why they had changed their minds.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep themselves well and safe from harm. They eagerly discussed their learning in the computer suite, explaining how to avoid cyber bullying and how to keep yourself safe while using the internet. They are aware of healthy lifestyles and the importance of a balanced diet and exercise.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and they know what to do if it occurs. They are aware of the different forms of bullying, including homophobic and racist bullying, and are clear that all forms of bullying are unacceptable. They share a consistent view that all are valued: this is the 'St Aidan's Way' of 'respect for the life and dignity of each individual'.
- Pupils value their stronger voice through the house group forums. Through these forums, they make decisions about how to use their funding allocation. They are active

in raising funds for projects and charities and take pride in deciding where these funds should go. Pupils confidently shared their ideas and views on what has improved since the last inspection. They value the new playground markings, the range of lunchtime clubs and activities on offer, the re-stocked school library and re-opening of The Pavilion.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in and around school, and additional activities at lunchtime help them enjoy their time away from learning in class. They are polite, well mannered and welcoming. Pupils wear their uniforms smartly and respect the school rules. The school site is tidy and litter free.
- A range of strategies implemented since the last inspection have contributed to the significant improvement in attendance, which is now in line with the national average. Effective communication on the importance of attendance is raising the awareness of parents and carers of the school's 'zero-tolerance approach' to leave during term time.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Occasionally, a few pupils are inattentive in lessons when teaching is less effective, and this weakens the progress they make.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement. Pupils' progress across the curriculum varies due to variations in the quality of teaching. Scrutiny of current pupils' learning in books, from this and the previous academic year, and work on display, shows variability between some classes in the same year group and across key stages.
- Pupils complete tasks diligently and take care to present their work neatly. However, the activities set across the wider curriculum do not systematically build on what pupils may already know or challenge them so that they make the progress of which they are capable. Staff turnover, previous inaccuracies in assessment, and weaker teaching over the past few years mean that there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers are applying the training they have received in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics more effectively. Evidence in current pupils' books shows that teachers successfully use high-quality literature and interesting themes to excite and engage pupils to write for a range of purposes and audiences. In mathematics, there are now planned opportunities for mathematical reasoning and problem solving. However, the activities do not consistently stretch and challenge pupils, so that they make the good progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils make stronger progress across the Year 6 classes. This resulted in the much-improved 2018 outcomes at the end of key stage 2. Gaps in the current Year 6 pupils' knowledge are rapidly being eradicated. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for their move to secondary school.
- In key stage 1, phonics is taught systematically, and pupils learn to enjoy reading and listening to stories. Consequently, the results in phonics rose dramatically in 2018. For

the first time in three years, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard was above the national average.

- Pupils' learning in their books, alongside the school's own information for current pupils, show that those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are making good progress from their low starting points.
- A more strategic approach when planning for pupil premium spending is starting to support disadvantaged pupils in making comparable or better progress, compared with other pupils.

## Early years provision

## Requires improvement

- The early years provision requires improvement as the quality of teaching and learning over time has been variable. The school's own assessment information indicates that children have fallen behind in the past. The proportion of children who reached a good level of development at the end of Reception Year fell significantly in 2017 and was well below the national average.
- In 2017, inaccurate assessments, along with inconsistent leadership in early years, and weaker teaching in Nursery, contributed to the weaker progress seen in this year group. Consequently, at the start of this academic year, a lower proportion of children transferring from the Nursery class and joining the current Reception class demonstrated the skills and abilities typical for their age.
- Since the publication of the last monitoring visit, those responsible for leadership and governance at the school have secured intensive early years leadership support from the diocese. In addition, since the start of the term, the experienced head of the early years has taken on the role full time, increasing her leadership from two to five days. Collectively, adults have reviewed the provision on offer and identified areas for improvement.
- Some inconsistencies remain in the effective use of assessment to support children's learning. For example, although the observations adults make on how well children are learning are detailed and increasingly accurate, they do not clearly identify whether children's skills are in line with those typical for children of their age. In addition, evidence from work scrutiny in Reception books showed some variability when adults did make judgements according to children's ages and stages.
- Much time and investment have gone into improving the outdoor play areas. Adults plan and set up exciting activities. However, on occasions, adults' use of instructional language is too focused on providing direction, limiting children's opportunities to explore their own ideas.
- The early years leader knows what works well and what needs to be improved. Opportunities to moderate current children's assessments with those of local schools and at local authority moderation meetings are contributing to greater consistency and accuracy in adults' judgements.
- A system for tracking children's progress against all seven areas of the early years foundation stage is in place. Adults in the setting are capturing rich evidence of children's learning in Reception and this is providing a record of the journey of each

child. Parents contribute to their child's learning journey, sharing information on what their child can do.

- Children make a smooth transition into school and parents appreciate the home visits and information on offer to support this process.
- Adults have high expectations for behaviour. Children cooperate well with one another and demonstrate curiosity about the activities on offer. Children are well behaved and can sustain concentration, seeing tasks through to completion. Children particularly enjoy learning in the newly developed outdoor areas.
- Safeguarding is effective in early years. Members of staff supervise children vigilantly. Staff are well trained in identifying sudden changes in behaviour that may be a cause for concern. The early years leader has ensured that the early years provision meets all the statutory requirements for the early years foundation stage.
- In 2018, children made stronger progress across the Reception classes. This resulted in the much-improved proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception Year. Children are now better prepared for their move into Year 1.



## School details

Unique reference number	140295
Local authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	10061176

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	422
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mr John Anthony
Executive Headteacher	Mrs Susan Johnson
Telephone number	020 8590 5223
Website	<a href="http://www.staidansacademy.org">www.staidansacademy.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@st-aidans.redbridge.sch.uk">admin@st-aidans.redbridge.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	21–22 February 2017

## Information about this school

- St Aidan's Catholic Primary Academy joined The Good Shepherd Catholic Trust on 1 September 2018. The formal support, in place prior to the first monitoring inspection, from the executive headteacher, for two days a week, ceases at the end of the term. However, an informal alliance between the two schools will remain as the executive headteacher continues to provide mentoring for the acting head of school, while the recruitment of a substantive headteacher is under way. A deputy headteacher joined the school at the start of the term. Both the head of school and the deputy headteacher appointments are secure until August 2019. The experienced, substantive head of early years is now employed full time.
- The Good Shepherd Catholic Trust is made up of St Aidan's Catholic Primary Academy and The Palmer Catholic Academy. Four other Catholic primary schools from within the Diocese of Brentwood (including the current executive headteacher's base school) are due to join the trust in September 2019. Governance in this recently formed multi-

academy trust is currently provided through the interim trust board, which includes some of the original members of the interim executive board, with management from an executive team. The formation of local governing bodies for each school within the trust is planned.

- The school became subject to special measures in February 2017 and was removed from this category during this inspection.
- St Aidan's Catholic Primary Academy is larger than the average-sized primary school. Since the previous inspection, the early years provision has decreased in size. There is now one Reception class for children. The part-time morning Nursery class and the one Reception class make up the early years provision. There are two classes from Year 1 to Year 6.
- The vast majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, with a high proportion speaking English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average, as are the proportions of pupils with SEND.
- The school provides a breakfast club, which is managed by the trust.
- The school provides a Catholic education for pupils between three and 11 years of age. This Catholic education provision was judged 'good' at the school's most recent section 48 inspection, which took place in September 2017.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the fourth monitoring visit of the school. The school was judged to require special measures in February 2017. The inspection took account of the evidence gathered during the third monitoring visit in May 2018, when considering the judgements for this inspection.
- The inspectors observed learning in all year groups. Observations were undertaken with the executive headteacher and members of the school’s senior leadership team. Observations in early years were also undertaken with the school’s early years leader and the deputy head of education for the Diocese of Brentwood, who has been providing early years support for the school.
- Inspectors met with three trustees, including the chair of the interim trust board and with the newly appointed chief accounting officer. A discussion took place with a representative from the diocese, and a phone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils to discuss their learning and their views on the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, phase group leaders and subject leaders, including those who lead English and mathematics across the school. Inspectors also met with a group of staff from across the school.
- During this and the previous monitoring inspection, inspectors examined a range of school documents, including information on pupils’ progress and outcomes across the school, improvement plans, curriculum plans, and checks on the quality of teaching. They also examined school records relating to governance, safeguarding and behaviour.
- Inspectors scrutinised a sample of books from this term and the last academic year, to see what progress pupils make over time.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to information gathered from discussions with parents during the inspection and the 17 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also considered the views gathered by the school in recent pupil questionnaires and the questionnaires sent to parents of pupils with SEND.

## Inspection team

Jean Thwaites, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Joy Barter	Ofsted Inspector
Sean Tobin	Ofsted Inspector

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