

Saint Paul's Catholic School

Spencefield Lane, Leicester, Leicestershire LE5 6HN

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
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, supported well by senior leaders, has a clear vision for the school and has high expectations of staff and pupils. Senior leaders have improved the school significantly since the previous inspection and the school is well placed to improve further.
- Leaders have a clear, honest and objective understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- Leaders have successfully improved teaching. In most classes, year groups and subjects, pupils learn well and make strong progress.
- Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects and understand the requirements of the examination courses they offer.
- Teachers ask pupils questions to deepen their understanding of subjects. Pupils frequently respond with detailed answers without further prompting.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and frequently highly personalised. However, some disadvantaged pupils and those with low starting points do not take examination courses that support these pupils to do as well as they could.
- The governing body is effective. Governors are dedicated, know the school well and hold leaders to account.
- Behaviour of pupils is consistently good in lessons and around the school. They are courteous, polite and respectful. In lessons, most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning.
- Overall, attendance has remained close to the national average. For disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, attendance has improved and is now close to that of their peers in school.
- Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are making increasingly good progress across a wide range of subjects. However, leaders do not always precisely analyse the impact of actions taken to further accelerate disadvantaged pupils' progress so that they can make progress in line with that of other pupils nationally.
- The sixth form is outstanding and students make very strong progress. Leaders here are relentless in their promotion of academic excellence.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff work well with pupils and parents and carers to ensure that pupils are safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that proven strategies to accelerate the progress of pupils lead to consistently rapid progress across a broad range of subjects, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those with low starting points.
- Refine the curriculum in key stage 4 further so that all disadvantaged pupils and those with low starting points are provided with examination subjects that support better outcomes and next steps effectively.
- Put measures in place to ensure that leaders analyse more precisely the impact of strategies and actions taken to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. Aply supported by other senior leaders and governors, he has taken effective steps towards addressing the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Consequently, pupils now receive a good standard of education at the school.
- Senior leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. They recognise its strengths and areas to further develop. Consequently, leaders' plans are focused on the areas of the school that need additional support. Senior leaders have demonstrated the capacity to make any improvements required. For example, the monitoring of teaching routinely focuses on the impact of teaching on learning for different groups of pupils.
- Teachers' engagement in training has had a positive impact on improving teaching, learning and assessment since the previous inspection. Leaders have designed and planned a coherent training programme to reflect the needs of individual teachers, based on the school's 'teaching and learning protocols'. The impact of training is evident in the improvement in pupils' progress.
- Leaders have implemented an effective approach to checking the quality of teaching, and they know the staff well. If gaps in teachers' skills are noticed, teachers are quickly given specific support that leads to improvement.
- Middle leaders are motivated and focused on improving the school because they feel empowered and supported. Subject leaders are accountable for the performance of their teams and are, in most cases, stepping up to the challenge well. Senior leaders have raised their expectations of subject leaders. Most subject leaders are effective. There are a few areas where they are not yet completely competent in their role of ensuring the high quality of teaching, learning and assessment. However, senior leaders are working alongside these leaders effectively to strengthen the impact of their work.
- The curriculum that pupils follow is broad and balanced for most pupils. It is especially strong in key stage 3, where the courses that pupils follow routinely match the needs and interests of all pupils. Leaders accurately recognise that at key stage 4, although the curriculum meets the needs of almost all pupils, changes are required to ensure that a small group of disadvantaged pupils and those with low starting points are provided with courses that best fit their needs. These pupils currently do not make the progress that they are capable of achieving.
- Most parents view the school positively. One parent commented, 'Both my children have good support at school. Leadership is good throughout and any concerns are dealt with promptly.' Another parent said: 'My child has just started at this school during this academic year. She has settled in well and made the transition from primary to secondary school well, thanks to the school staff.'
- Leaders systems for the management of teachers' performance are clear and well considered. Teachers' targets link to whole-school priorities and the development

needs of individual teachers. Most teachers feel that the school's training encourages, challenges and supports their improvement.

- The leadership of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is good. Leaders use additional funds effectively to ensure that pupils receive precise support. As a result, most pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making good progress from their individual starting points.
- Leaders are making increasingly effective use of the pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up funding. For example, small-group tuition and support with reading are helping Year 7 pupils catch up with their peers. However, leaders' evaluation of the actions taken to support disadvantaged pupils is not precise enough to ensure that the progress of this group is as rapid as it should be.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a real strength of the school. The range of activities are led and managed well. This ensures that pupils' development in this area runs through every aspect of school life. Consequently, pupils' preparation for life in modern Britain, including their rights and responsibilities, is excellent.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Governors have supported and challenged school leaders to make the improvements identified at the time of the previous inspection successfully. For example, pupils' outcomes in science have become a strength of the school since the last inspection because of strong improvement planning and the actions that followed. Consequently, the educational performance of the school continues to improve.
- Governors monitor the leadership of the school and the performance of its staff effectively. Teachers and leaders are held to account routinely for the progress of pupils at the school, which has resulted in good outcomes.
- Governors are effective in their responsibilities regarding keeping pupils safe. They ensure that staff receive appropriate training and that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff have received appropriate training and leaders work effectively with outside agencies, including alternative providers, to keep pupils safe.
- The school's record of checks made on the suitability of staff to work with young people is accurately maintained and compliant. The safeguarding and child protection policy is up to date and meets the requirements of statutory guidance.
- Pupils and parents agree that the school keeps them safe. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe from a variety of risks, including safe use of the internet, social media and mobile technology. As a result, pupils have a high awareness of e-safety and have the confidence to report any concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- School leaders have successfully improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment since the previous inspection and it is now good. Leaders provide a well-regarded programme of regular training that meets individual teachers' development needs effectively and well. Consequently, where weaker teaching persists, teachers receive carefully considered support and guidance so that they can quickly improve.
- Teachers use their subject knowledge and assessment information carefully to plan activities that interest pupils and effectively support their progress. Scrutiny of pupils' work in books indicates that teaching is accelerating the progress that pupils make. This is in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science and the humanities.
- Teachers are skilled in questioning pupils to deepen their learning. They know their pupils well and plan learning carefully that caters for pupils' needs. Teachers ask questions carefully, so that pupils are challenged and supported appropriately to think and learn, for example in a mathematics lesson where pupils were able to tackle some challenging problems evaluating functions.
- The great majority of teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and set them challenging tasks accordingly. They have positive relationships with pupils so that lessons flow smoothly and effectively. Consequently, pupils focus well on their activities and are keen to learn. Examples of this positive learning culture were seen during the inspection, particularly, though not exclusively, in English and humanities lessons.
- Teachers encourage pupils to reflect on the standard of their own work, and sometimes that of their peers, to think about how they could improve. An example of where this is effective is in English, where pupils' self-reflection is insightful and clearly leads to improvements in the standard of their work.
- Pupils usually make good use of the feedback teachers that provide to improve their knowledge, skills and understanding. This is strongly and consistently evident in English and humanities. However, at times, the school policy is not followed carefully enough, for example, teachers' comments sometimes lack precision.
- Teachers commonly plan and use strategies that successfully engage pupils. Pupils respond well in lessons and are clearly proud when answering questions accurately and achieving well. For example, in a history lesson, when the teacher was asking questions about the validity of various source materials the pupils were being asked to use.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils agree that they feel safe and are safe in school. All staff, and almost all parents, agree that this is true.

- The school is an inclusive and caring environment. There are few incidents of racist or derogatory language and those that do occur are dealt with effectively. Pupils understand the importance of fundamental British values. They listen to each other's views respectfully and are welcoming of the views of those different from themselves. They challenge and debate beliefs in a respectful and tolerant manner. They are very polite to adults and visitors and treat each other with respect.
- Pastoral leaders and support staff know their pupils very well. A wide variety of support is provided for pupils, through their tutors, 'faith in families' support and the chaplaincy. Many pupils who responded to their online questionnaire appreciate the work that the school does to promote their emotional health and well-being.
- Pupils in all year groups access good-quality, independent careers information, advice and guidance. They receive valuable information about the different options available to them when they leave school and have individual meetings with a careers adviser. Because of this work, and the wider efforts of the school, almost all pupils from the school move on to appropriate further education, employment or training.
- The school curriculum ensures that pupils receive a range of opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Religious education lessons, assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons are all planned activities that successfully develop this area of work.
- Pupils participate in a range of extra-curricular activities that include sports and music as well as opportunities to seek extra support from teachers. In addition, pupils enjoy residential trips and charitable activities. They have been successful in raising significant sums of money for charities over recent years.
- Incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils say that when they do occur, they are usually dealt with effectively by adults. Leaders work hard to ensure that pupils are taught about anti-bullying, for example through assemblies led by members of the school council.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite, friendly and helpful and generally behave very well in lessons and around the building. During breaktimes and lunchtimes, they socialise happily together and interact well with each other and with staff. They wear their uniform smartly and keep the school free from litter.
- Leaders and teachers use the school's behaviour policy more consistently since the previous inspection. As a result of this, they have been effective in reducing the number of internal exclusions. Although the number of external exclusions has remained high during the previous academic year, leaders have been successful in reducing these more recently. Leaders use alternative provision to support pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. They closely monitor pupils' attendance and progress through regular contact with the providers. These pupils complete their education and gain some qualifications because of this provision.
- School leaders have worked hard to improve levels of attendance. A number of strategies have been implemented which are having demonstrable impact on reducing the number of days pupils miss school. It has been particularly effective in improving

attendance rates for disadvantaged pupils, which are now close to those of their peers in the school. Absence rates overall, and for those who are persistently absent, are broadly in line with the national average.

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good and this has made a significant contribution to the improvements in the pace of learning since the previous inspection. Pupils also show an increasing pride in the way that they present their work.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' progress in the provisional 2017 examination results overall and in most subjects, is close to the national average.
- Outcomes in mathematics were less secure in 2016 but showed a notable improvement in 2017, with pupils making average progress. Outcomes in English have remained broadly average since the previous inspection.
- Information provided by the school for current pupils, shows that progress is good across a broad range of subjects. In science, history and religious education, pupils' progress is especially strong. In English, where examination outcomes dipped slightly in 2017, most current pupils are working at the level expected of their age and are making the progress that they should.
- School leaders have an accurate picture of where pupils achieve well and where actions to improve outcomes noted at the last inspection have been effective, such as in science. They also recognise the few remaining areas where variation remains, notably in physical education and design technology. Leaders are taking steps to ensure that this is rectified quickly.
- In previous years, disadvantaged pupils have not made the progress that they should have, particularly in English and mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that disadvantaged pupils currently at the school are making more rapid progress across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. This is due to teachers having a clear focus on their progress. However, the difference in progress of these pupils with other pupils nationally is wide. More work is still required to ensure that the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who reach the required standard by the end of key stage 4 increases further.
- The progress of least-able pupils is improving but remains variable. These pupils are making similar rates of progress to their peers at key stage 3. However, leaders accept that there is more to do to ensure that these pupils achieve as well as their peers in the school.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have their individual requirements identified and met well. They are provided with a good balance of challenge and support. Accordingly, their outcomes are generally strong across a broad range of subjects and they move on to further education or training successfully.
- Leaders monitor the outcomes of the very small number of pupils who follow alternative provision effectively. Consequently, they make progress in the limited range of examination courses they study. Currently, there are less pupils attending alternative provision from the school than was the case during the previous academic year.

- Pupils who arrive in Year 7 and in other year groups with very low levels of literacy and numeracy receive additional support. The support for literacy is effective in helping many of them to catch up so that they can access the curriculum effectively. Numeracy support is at an earlier stage of development.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- Leaders in the sixth form are extremely effective and strive for excellence in all areas. They are determined to ensure that all students achieve the best they can. As a result of this, the majority of students excel in gaining very good examination results. Consequently, the sixth form is outstanding.
- Staff know and care about their students as individuals. Teachers plan effectively for their needs as learners. This enables students to make excellent, sustained progress. Students are ambitious and want to do well.
- During the inspection, inspectors were not able to observe any Year 13 lessons due to students sitting mock examinations. However, inspectors saw strong teaching in the Year 12 that is lively, well organised and engages students well. This results in students making very good progress. Students speak highly of their teachers. This enables students to develop a thirst for knowledge.
- Teachers are keen to develop their students as successful and independent learners. In an A-level English lesson, an excellent example was seen of students preparing to annotate a video clip of a metaphysical poem independently. Students were able to do this very successfully because the teacher had skilfully provided them with opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding previously.
- In 2017, provisional outcomes for students have improved from the 2016 results. Progress overall was well above the national average and was particularly strong in religious studies, art, English and biology. Where outcomes were less strong, for example in mathematics and geography, leaders have taken decisive action leading to considerable improvement.
- Information provided by the school, shows that students are making strong progress overall. They make the most progress in psychology, religious education, history, English and biology.
- Students who need to develop English and mathematical skills achieve well in the sixth form and make good progress with their GCSE qualifications.
- Retention of students between Years 12 and 13 is good. Nearly all students progress to study at the next level or complete two-year A-level study programmes.
- Students are set challenging targets, and progress against these is regularly measured. They said that the constant feedback given helps them improve their work. Students who are falling behind are swiftly given effective support to make better progress.
- Students receive high-quality careers guidance about university applications and apprenticeships. This enables them to make carefully considered decisions about their futures. The proportion of students who move to further and higher education is above the national averages, with all those applying gaining a place.

- Almost all students complete a work experience placement. The Year 12 students said they believe this is both enjoyable and helpful.
- Students' attendance and punctuality are good. Students are encouraged to help others, including younger pupils in the school. For example, inspectors observed Year 12 students supporting younger pupils by listening to them reading and supporting them very effectively when required. Students have raised funds to support children in Ghana through their long-standing 'Team Ghana' initiative.
- Students in the sixth form are safe, have positive attitudes and demonstrate an admirable focus on their studies.

School details

Unique reference number	120307
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10041558

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,090
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Laura O'Brien
Headteacher	Neil Lockyer
Telephone number	0116 241 4057
Website	www.st-pauls.leicester.sch.uk
Email address	office@st-pauls.leicester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 December 2015

Information about this school

- This school is slightly larger than the average secondary comprehensive. Pupils travel from all over the county to attend this school.
- Pupils come from a diverse range of backgrounds, and around a half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups.
- Around a third of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is similar to other secondary schools nationally.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is similar to other schools nationally. A lower proportion than nationally are in receipt of education, health and care plans.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4.
- There are nine pupils who study courses off-site. The alternative provision is sourced through the Leicester Partnership Schools. Pupils access full-time and part-time courses from The Carisbrooke Specialist Learning Centre.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 41 lessons, six of which were seen jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors made short visits to tutor time.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils at breaktime, lunchtime and as pupils moved around the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised, in detail, a sample of pupils' books in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors held a number of meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and the chair of the governing body and other governors.
- Inspectors spoke with a wide range of pupils from all year groups in meetings, in lessons and around the school at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of the school's documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, its action plan, data on pupils' attainment and progress, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding procedures, evaluations of the quality of teaching and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the 73 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the 82 responses to the online staff questionnaire and the 198 responses to the online pupils' questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jamie Clarke, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Martin	Ofsted Inspector
Jason Brooks	Ofsted Inspector
Lynn Cox	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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