

St Aloysius Catholic Primary School

Aldenham Street, London NW1 1PS

Inspection dates

20–21 March 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Although the progress of current pupils is improving, the quality of teaching is not yet consistently strong. Consequently, pupils are not making consistently good progress across the curriculum.
- Due to a legacy of poor teaching, pupils' attainment in all subjects at key stages 1 and 2 in 2017 national tests was below average. Attainment was especially low for disadvantaged pupils, including that at a greater depth. Pupils' progress in reading was particularly weak.
- Too few of the most able pupils achieve the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because they are not consistently challenged to enable them make the progress of which they are capable.
- Expectations of pupils' spelling, grammar, handwriting and the presentation of their work are inconsistent across the school.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to apply their mathematical skills and knowledge in reasoning and solving practical problems.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to write in depth in English and other subjects to improve their writing skills.
- The teaching of phonics is not consistently effective in improving pupils' skills in reading.
- Teachers are yet to ensure that pupils routinely read widely with confidence and increasing fluency and comprehension.
- The skills of subject leaders, especially in science and foundation subjects, are not sufficiently developed to enable them to contribute fully to school improvements.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is not high enough. Their absence holds them back from achieving more.

The school has the following strengths

- The new executive headteacher, head of school and governors have proved highly effective in bringing about rapid improvements. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' progress and behaviour are improving.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Their personal development and behaviour are good.
- Children make a good start in the early years. They benefit from good teaching and make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively and reflects the school's ethos and Catholic principles.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make good progress, by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently challenge the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, to do their best
 - expectations of pupils' spelling, grammar and handwriting and presentation are consistently high
 - pupils routinely apply their knowledge and reasoning skills in mathematics to solve a wider variety of practical problems
 - there are more opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their writing skills through extended pieces of writing in English and other subjects
 - the teaching of phonics is consistently strong to make sure that pupils have strategies to read unfamiliar or difficult words
 - pupils read more widely and are exposed to a full range of authors, texts and genres so more of them read for pleasure.
- Raise the attainment of pupils, especially for disadvantaged pupils and White British boys, by ensuring that:
 - outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics, including at a greater depth, improve so that they are in line with the national average.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - developing the skills of subject leaders, especially in science and foundation subjects, so that they can contribute fully to improvement.
- Improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils so that they have better chances of achieving well.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new leadership team, including governors, has been highly effective in tackling the legacy of weak teaching and underachievement, to bring about rapid improvements. They have provided much-needed vision, direction and stability after the school's expansion.
- Leaders have worked closely with governors to take bold and decisive actions on improving the quality of teaching. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' progress are improving. However, the leadership team has not been in place long enough to ensure that the effective practice is fully embedded across the school and that standards are consistently high.
- The new executive headteacher has high expectations and is inspirational in her leadership. She and the head of school have established a strong culture of teamwork and have been relentless in driving improvements. Senior leaders and governors are passionate about providing the best possible education so that pupils can do their best.
- Leaders have introduced a robust system for checking pupils' progress. Leaders have worked effectively with other schools and the local authority to ensure that the assessment system is fit for purpose. Leaders work closely with staff and meet them regularly to check pupils' progress. Staff identify quickly those pupils who are falling behind and provide them with effective support to meet their needs.
- Leaders have improved the arrangements for checking teachers' performance to ensure that they are effective. Targets set for staff are closely linked to pupils' achievement and main school priorities. There is effective support and training in place for staff. This is improving their skills and securing continued improvements in teaching, learning and assessment.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and engaging. Pupils experience a cross-curricular, topic-based approach to the curriculum that covers all the subjects of the national curriculum. The curriculum is enriched by extra-curricular activities and clubs. For example, there are opportunities to take part in educational visits, choir, cooking, dance and a range of sporting activities. Staff promote British values effectively through pupils learning about rights and responsibilities, the rule of law, democracy and respect. The school prepares its pupils well for life in modern Britain by teaching them about different cultures and faiths. However, the curriculum is yet to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress across the subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the curriculum and the school's ethos and Catholic principles.
- The leadership of and provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is effective. Leaders use the additional funding well to provide good support to individual pupils so that they can access their learning. Leaders make effective use of outside specialists, including speech and language therapists and educational psychologists, to support this group of pupils. As a result, most pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making good progress.

- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively. For example, this group of pupils receives additional support from teachers, mentors, teaching assistants and counsellors. This is having a positive impact on the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- The additional government funding to promote sport and physical education (PE), the primary school physical PE and sports premium, is spent effectively. It is used well to promote a range of sporting activities, including competitive matches with other schools. Good use is made of specialised sports coaches to enhance pupils' skills and experiences. This provision contributes well to promoting pupils' healthy lifestyles and physical well-being.
- Subject leaders, especially in English and mathematics, know the main strengths and weaknesses in the teaching of their subjects. This is because they have opportunities to check the quality of teaching and learning. However, some subject leaders in science and foundation subjects are relatively new to their roles. They are not yet sufficiently involved in checking the quality of teaching and learning. They therefore have had limited opportunity to challenge teachers about the progress their pupils make and to provide them with support to help them improve.
- The local authority has supported the school well through the regular monitoring visits. Officers worked closely with leaders during the challenging period of school expansion and staff changes.

Governance of the school

- Governors are highly committed and are ambitious for pupils. They are skilful and knowledgeable. They support and challenge leaders well to bring about improvements.
- Governors know the school well, including its strengths and areas for development. They receive good information from senior leaders on the progress of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. They therefore know about the achievement of pupils, including different groups of pupils. They visit the school regularly to find out for themselves how well pupils are learning. They meet pupils to listen to their views and concerns.
- Governors work with senior leaders to ensure that pupils are kept safe. They meet with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss safeguarding issues, including training for staff. They look at the single central record to ensure that all the checks are made on the suitability of staff to work at the school. Governors have completed an appropriate level of safeguarding training, including training on the safer recruitment of staff.
- Governors have worked effectively with senior leaders and the local authority to ensure the smooth expansion of the school and the recruitment of new staff. They have supported the executive headteacher well in taking firm decisions on improving the quality of teaching.
- Governors have a good overview of the arrangements for managing the performance of staff, including that of the executive headteacher.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- There is a strong culture of vigilance because leaders ensure that safeguarding pupils is everyone's priority. Staff receive regular training and updates on safeguarding and child protection procedures, based on current statutory requirements. Staff are clear about their responsibilities and know what to do if they have any concerns relating to a child's safety.
- The school's vetting systems for checking and recording the suitability of staff are robust. These are routinely checked by governors.
- Leaders work effectively with other professionals and agencies for the safety and welfare of pupils. They readily follow up concerns in a timely manner if they are not satisfied with the response. Staff also work closely with parents and carers to keep children safe.
- Record-keeping in relation to safeguarding is precise and files are well maintained.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- There has been a legacy of weak teaching over time. Although the quality of teaching is improving, it is not yet consistently good.
- Some good examples of writing were seen in pupils' books and displayed around the school. However, the quality of writing is variable, and some contains spelling and grammatical mistakes. Not all teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' work. This inconsistency was also seen in some pupils' books where handwriting was sometimes poor and mistakes allowed to go uncorrected. Occasionally, a few staff make spelling errors in their feedback to pupils about their work.
- Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to write at length and practise and embed their writing skills across the curriculum. Sometimes, the over-reliance on worksheets that usually require shorter responses limits extended writing.
- Pupils have time to rehearse their ideas before writing them down. Pupils are encouraged to develop their writing through drafting and redrafting so that they can structure their ideas and improve their work. This was seen, for example, in a Year 6 class in which pupils explored the character of Macbeth and his thoughts and subsequent actions.
- Reading is improving through a greater emphasis on pupils' specific reading skills. There are daily 'guided reading' sessions for pupils to read and improve their comprehension. Pupils' confidence in reading is improving. However, the teaching of phonics to help pupils read unfamiliar or difficult words is variable. Occasionally, staff pronounce the sounds that letters make incorrectly. Pupils have a limited exposure to a variety of authors and a range of texts to encourage more of them to read for pleasure. Some pupils in key stage 2 said that they would like a greater range of books to read.
- Teachers have a good subject knowledge in mathematics. Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of different operations. In a Year 2 class, for example, pupils used a partitioning method to halve numbers effectively and worked methodically. However, pupils do not routinely apply their knowledge and reasoning skills to solve a wider variety of practical problems in mathematics.

- Sometimes, the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not challenged sufficiently to help them make the progress of which they are capable. Occasionally, they have to wait for harder work, especially during a lengthy introduction to the lesson. This slows their progress.
- Teaching assistants generally provide good support for pupils, particularly for the disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. However, occasionally some of them have to wait for the teacher to finish the introduction to the lesson before working with pupils.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning well to test and reinforce pupils' understanding. However, questioning is not consistently probing enough for the most able pupils to help them think hard about their learning.
- Pupils told inspectors that they do not have enough 'experiments' in science. Inspection evidence confirmed that there is sometimes a lack of opportunities for pupils to increase their skills in investigative science. There are also some weaknesses in pupils' understanding of scientific vocabulary and concepts. Occasionally, teachers' subject knowledge is not strong enough to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Assessment information is secure and is increasingly used to plan learning. Those pupils who are falling behind in their learning are swiftly identified and provided with good additional support to help them improve.
- The focus on some of the foundation subjects has not been as strong as the focus on English and mathematics. Assessment systems to check pupils' progress in the foundation subjects are not sufficiently well developed. Therefore, leaders are not always able to check how well pupils are achieving in the foundation subjects, including in science.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are friendly, kind and courteous. They engage well with adults, visitors and each other.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and know about unsafe situations. For example, pupils know about fire and road safety and how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Older pupils know and understand the dangers associated with cyber bullying and gangs.
- Leaders work effectively with external agencies to meet the needs of pupils, including those who are potentially vulnerable to underachievement.
- Pupils that met inspectors said that behaviour has improved and that it is usually good. They said that there are very few incidents of bullying and pupils are better behaved than they used to be. Pupils said that they always feel safe in the school. They agreed that bullying, racism or homophobia is not an issue in the school. Pupils said that staff address their concerns and any issues in relation to poor behaviour quickly and effectively.

- Pupils have good attitudes to their learning. However, they occasionally lack concentration, and their progress slows, especially when the work is not challenging.
- Some pupils do not present their work well in books. This reflects inconsistent teaching and low expectations.
- There is a range of opportunities to develop pupils' physical fitness through, for example, sporting activities. Pupils know how to lead healthy lives.
- Pupils enjoy the range of responsibilities they have to develop their confidence. For example, they benefit through being members of the school council, travel safety monitors and health champions. This is a good preparation for Year 6 pupils for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils are taught and understand the difference between right and wrong. They show an appreciation for diversity and are respectful of people from other backgrounds and with different beliefs.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils from all backgrounds get on well with each other and they conduct themselves well. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Pupils interact and work well together in lessons.
- Some pupils mentioned that the playground is 'too small' and they sometimes 'bump into each other' during play. This, they said, leads to some arguments on occasions. Leaders are aware of this and are working to further improve the playground arrangements. However, playground supervision by staff is adequate to keep pupils safe.
- Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average. Leaders are working well with the small number of families whose children are persistently absent in order to improve their attendance. The breakfast club is used well to improve the attendance of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Leaders are successfully tackling the legacy of underachievement. Consequently, pupils' progress is improving across the curriculum subjects, including that of pupils who are disadvantaged.
- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because they are not yet making consistently good progress across the curriculum and the school. There are still many pupils who have gaps in their knowledge and understanding because of weaker teaching over time.
- In the 2017 key stage 2 national tests and assessments, pupils' attainment at the expected and higher standards was below the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils' progress in reading was well below average. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils, most of

whom are White British boys, was below that of their classmates and other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.

- At the end of key stage 1 national tests in 2017, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check in 2017 was below the national average. Occasionally, teachers' subject knowledge is not consistently strong to ensure that pupils have secure strategies to help them in their reading.
- In the science assessments in 2017, pupils' attainment was below average in both key stages 1 and 2. There is lack of monitoring of the progress pupils make in science across the school. Therefore, leaders are not able to take swift action to address any gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities made better progress than their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. The provision for this group of pupils is strong and they receive well-targeted support by teachers and teaching assistants.
- The proportion of pupils in both key stages 1 and 2 who achieved at a greater depth is smaller than the national average. This is because the most able pupils are not consistently challenged to help them make the progress of which they are capable and attain highly.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are increasingly well prepared for their next stage of education.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the Nursery with knowledge, skills and abilities that are below and sometimes well below those typical for their age. The inspection evidence and assessment information provided by leaders indicate that the majority of children make good progress during their time in Nursery and Reception. The proportion of children attaining a good level of development by the end of their time in the early years is increasing, and is now approaching the national average. Children are prepared well for Year 1.
- Children show good attitudes to learning, and their behaviour is typically good. Children collaborate well with each other and most are keen to share resources. They enjoy coming to school and make a brisk start to their learning. Children are confident to talk to adults and visitors about their learning. For example, children in Nursery were developing their counting skills and one child said to the inspector, 'I got 15 counters; I added two more.' There is a good balance between child-led and adult-led activities.
- Teaching is good and helps children to make good progress from their different starting points. Occasionally, the teaching of phonics is not effective to help children learn the sounds that letters make.
- The outdoor learning area has improved and is well resourced. Children from all backgrounds, including boys and girls, mix well with each other. However, adults sometimes miss opportunities to extend children's language and communication skills

through closer interaction and questioning. Occasionally, the most able children are not sufficiently challenged through questioning and activities to extend their learning.

- Leadership of early years is good. Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the early years. Leaders track the progress of children carefully in all the different areas of learning. They identify those children who are falling behind to provide them with effective support and to ensure that they make good progress. For example, leaders have been effective in diminishing the differences in attainment between boys and girls and between disadvantaged children and their classmates. There are good links with other professionals to support children, including with their speech and language development. Leaders know that more needs to be done through displays to reflect the cultural diversity represented in the school and in Britain.
- Links with parents are strong. Parents receive regular information on the progress of their children. Adults make home visits prior to children starting school to ensure a smooth transition. Parents are keen to share what their children have achieved at home through placing 'wow moments' notes on the display wall in the classroom. There are opportunities for parents to support their children's learning through 'stay and play' mornings.
- Leaders and staff work together well to ensure that safeguarding is effective.

School details

Unique reference number	100037
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	10049007

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	325
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Harvey
Executive headteacher	Clare McFlynn
Telephone number	020 7387 3551
Website	www.acps.camden.sch.uk
Email address	executivehead@acps.camden.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 January 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those pupils who speak English as an additional language are well above the national average.
- St Aloysius Catholic Primary School opened in January 2017 following the expansion of St Aloysius Catholic Junior School and closure of St Aloysius Catholic Infant School. In October 2017, the 'stand-alone' Nursery unit was closed and children in the early years were transferred to a building at the lower-school site of the primary school.

- There have been a significant number of changes in staffing since the school opened. Most staff are newly appointed, with nine new teachers joining in September 2017. The executive headteacher was appointed in September 2016, and the head of school was appointed in May 2017. There is a new leadership team and a new governing body in place. Most subject leaders are also new to their posts.
- The executive headteacher is also the executive headteacher of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Islington, London.
- Early years consists of a Nursery class and a Reception class, and all children attend full time.
- The school runs a breakfast club and a range of after-school activities.
- In 2017, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school in all year groups. They conducted joint observations of learning with senior leaders.
- The inspectors scrutinised pupils' books, spoke to pupils about their learning and heard some pupils read in classrooms.
- Inspectors met with pupils in key stage 2 to discuss their learning and hear their views about the school. The inspectors listened to pupils in Years 1, 2, 3 and 6 read and discussed their reading with them.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at breaktime and at lunchtime.
- The inspectors met a range of staff, including the executive headteacher, head of school, assistant headteachers, subject leaders and teachers. The inspectors met with four members of the governing body, including the chair.
- A meeting was held with representatives from the local authority.
- The inspectors checked the single central register of pre-employment checks on staff and looked at pupils' attendance and behaviour records. They examined documents, including school improvement plans and policies in relation to safeguarding and child protection, and discussed safety issues with staff and pupils.
- The inspectors considered a range of information about the school. This included information on pupils' progress and information published on the school's website.
- Inspectors considered the 17 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 17 free-text responses from parents. The inspectors spoke with some parents as they dropped off their children at the start of the school day. There were no responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Avtar Sherri, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Julian Grenier	Ofsted Inspector
Sam Nowak	Ofsted Inspector
Rekha Bhakoo	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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