

Holy Infant and St Anthony RC Primary School

Mitre Street, Astley Bridge, Bolton, Lancashire, BL1 6QJ

Inspection dates 19–20 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' achievement over time is not yet consistently good. Many pupils are catching up on previous underperformance, particularly in Year 4.
- Boys do not achieve as well as girls in writing.
- By the end of Key Stage 1 not enough pupils reach above average attainment in writing.
- Too few pupils made better than expected progress or reached above average attainment by the end of Year 6 in reading and writing in 2013.
- Children's writing skills are less well developed in the Early Years Foundation Stage than their other skills.
- The progress of pupils with special educational needs was variable between classes in 2012/13.
- Teaching has not had sufficient impact over time to ensure securely good progress and achievement. There is not enough outstanding teaching.
- Some leaders are new to their role and have not developed the skills they need, or had sufficient time in role, to bring about further improvements quickly.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is strong and has improved significantly in 2013.
- Teaching observed during the inspection was predominantly good and pupils' progress is accelerating in response to good teaching.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They are keen to learn and do well. Behaviour around the school is often impeccable.
- Children settle in well and have a good start in the Reception class.
- Leadership of the executive headteachers, well supported by governors and staff, is bringing about improvements in teaching and achievement quickly.
- The school is a welcoming, safe place where children enjoy learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 part-lessons. Three of these were carried out jointly with the executive headteacher. Inspectors analysed pupils' work in their books. Inspectors listened to children reading.
- Discussions were held with staff, pupils, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Documents looked at included the self-evaluation summary, improvement plans, information on pupils' progress, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance, documents relating to safeguarding and local authority reports on the school's performance.
- Parents' views were taken into account through the 15 responses to Parent View (the Ofsted on-line questionnaire). Inspectors held conversations with parents as they brought their children to school in the morning.

Inspection team

Gillian Salter-Smith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Steve Rigby

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.)
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. A few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A few pupils are learning English as an additional language.
- An average proportion of pupils are supported through school action. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school is receiving many new pupils, some of whom arrive with complex learning needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards that set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has undergone a period of significant turbulence in leadership. An executive headteacher and acting headteacher were leading the school at the time of the last inspection. An executive headteacher led the school from September 2012 to August 2013. A different executive headteacher took up the post in September 2013 for one year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of teaching over time and further accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - increasing the amount of outstanding teaching and learning experienced by pupils ensuring that most-able pupils reach the standards of attainment of which they are capable, particularly in reading and writing
 - ensuring pupils have wider opportunities to improve their information and communication technology skills across subjects in the curriculum
 - making sure that checks on pupils' learning in lessons are more rigorous so that teachers recognise when pupils have not understood underlying concepts
 - making sure that when teachers mark pupils' work that pupils are encouraged to make the improvements suggested.
- Improve further the consistency of pupils' achievement across year groups, especially in writing for boys, for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and for pupils in Year 4 by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects across the curriculum
 - providing more stimulating activities to engage boys in writing.
- Improve the provision in the Reception class, especially for their reading and writing skills, by:
 - improving the communication between the school and the different settings that children experience before arriving in the Reception class so that staff have a better understanding of their previous progress, learning and achievements
 - providing more opportunities for parents to share and support their children's learning and progress by having access to and contributing to records kept on their children's learning more frequently
 - improving the quality of the outdoor learning areas so that there are more opportunities for children to experience physical development and knowledge and understanding of the wider

world.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - appointing a substantive headteacher in order to provide greater stability and direction
 - ensuring there are plans in place to develop the knowledge and skills of leaders new to their areas, and the time and opportunity to carry out the role effectively
 - improving systems to analyse pupils' progress so that there is more ready access to information of the progress of pupils over time, including from different groups.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because too many pupils have yet to catch up on previous underperformance, especially in Year 4. Boys' achievement in writing is not yet securely good. The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs varies a great deal between year groups and subjects.
- In Early Years Foundation Stage achievement is good. Over the past two years children's skills on entry to the Reception class have been below those typical for their age. In 2012/13, the proportion reaching all four of the early learning goals was a little better than the national average. Children's skills in writing were weaker than their other skills, especially for boys. Children known to be eligible for free school meals did not achieve as well as other children.
- Children currently in the Reception class are happy and settled. They are making good progress in learning letters and their sounds because of the well-taught sessions that include a good variety of stimulating activities to help children to learn. The environment, both indoors and outdoors, has plenty of reminders and prompts for letters, writing and numbers. Children are encouraged to read and develop a love of stories.
- Achievement in Key Stage 1 requires improvement. The sharp dip in attainment in 2012 recovered in 2013 and results were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Boys achieved better than girls. Not enough pupils reached above average levels in writing. Pupils made steady progress from their starting points. Pupils currently in Key Stage 1 are making good progress in response to good teaching. In Year 1 boys who were behind in writing skills in Reception are catching up because of the well-targeted teaching to individual needs and plenty of opportunities to continue learning through play and exploration.
- Results of the national phonics test (a test of pupils' early reading skills) taken by Year 1 pupils were above average in 2013 and an improvement on the previous year.
- Achievement in Key Stage 2 requires improvement. It is not yet securely good. In the 2012/13 national assessments, attainment was broadly average, with mathematics stronger than reading, writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling. This represents expected progress from starting points in Reception. The achievement of more-able pupils varies from year to year. In the most recent national tests, not enough of the more-able pupils reached above average levels or made better than expected progress in reading and writing.
- Pupils currently in Key Stage 2 are responding well to improved teaching and most are making good progress from their different starting points, including more-able pupils. Some pupils are still catching up on previous underperformance so that attainment has room to rise further, particularly in Year 4, and in writing for boys. The school is tackling underperformance but opportunities for pupils to practise writing and numeracy skills in topic work and subjects across the curriculum are not securely established across all year groups. The quality of writing in pupils' workbooks varies between year groups. In Year 6, writing is of a good standard, including for more-able pupils. In some other year groups, notably Year 4, writing is weak and it is clear that many pupils are far behind the standard expected for their age.
- Reading is encouraged widely. A good range of books is readily available in all classrooms. All children read to adults in school regularly. Some children have books that are not well matched to their reading abilities. Some pupils do not read very often at home. Those pupils who fall behind in their reading have specialist support that is helping them to catch up.
- Over time, there is little difference in the attainment between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are not. They often attain similar or sometimes better standards. The gap in progress is variable from year to year.
- Pupils newly arrived at the school settle in quickly. They receive well-targeted support, often on a one-to-one basis, that supports their progress effectively. Through the school's close attention to the progress of every pupil, equality of opportunity is now assured.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it has not yet secured good achievement over time, particularly in writing.
- In most lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was good and in some lessons it was outstanding. Improved teaching is helping pupils to accelerate their progress and catch up on previous underperformance. There is not yet enough outstanding teaching.
- In the Reception class, there is a good balance of learning led by adults and opportunities for children to learn through play and exploration. Adults develop children's language and communication skills through skilled questioning that develops children's ideas and interests. The indoor area is well planned to develop learning in all areas. Within the limits of the outdoor space, tasks and activities build on the learning planned for indoors. However, the space is very limited and restricts opportunities for physical development and developing knowledge and understanding of the wider world, such as growing plants.
- Teachers carefully assess children's progress in the Reception class and staff are aware of the next steps in learning for all children. However, information on children's progress before they arrive is not readily available or included in records of progress. Attractive folders –the learning journals –record children's progress. These are not readily accessible to parents and they are not used to celebrate the learning of the children with the parents very often. Parents do not have the chance to contribute their own observations of their children's development.
- Teaching of reading is improving with most pupils reading to adults several times a week. A reading for comprehension programme across the school supports progress, but does not provide a great deal of excitement or stimulation.
- Teaching of writing is improving. In most lessons pupils have clear targets to work towards so that they know how they can succeed and improve their work. Pupils benefit from checking their own and each other's work, although at times, pupils do not fully understand the criteria they are working on. Tasks are mostly well-adjusted to support learning at different levels. The most-able pupils are usually challenged to do their best, although this is less consistent in the topic work.
- Increasingly, staff select topics that engage boys so that they are well motivated to write, for example when considering the plight of those invaded by the Viking raiders. A good focus on time to talk and think before writing is having a positive effect. The 'Writing Wall of Excellence' in the school hall is proving a strong motivation for pupils to achieve well, including boys.
- Teaching of mathematics is improving with the development of a common approach to calculation across the school. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is secure so that they give clear explanations of concepts and encourage pupils to explain their thinking. However, on-going checks on learning are not always stringent enough. Although pupils remember the mechanics of a calculation, teachers do not recognise when pupils do not fully understand the underpinning concepts. Occasionally, opportunities for practical work are missed.
- Opportunities for pupils to practise and improve writing, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills in topic work and different subjects are less consistent between year groups. In some classes these opportunities are limited, in others there are good opportunities that help to stimulate enthusiasm for writing, for example, among boys.
- Additional adult support is used effectively to help pupils who have fallen behind to catch up. The impact of the work on pupils' progress is carefully checked.
- The support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is planned appropriately so that individuals get effective support from teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils newly arrived at the school, with many barriers to learning, get the support they need quickly, including external expertise where appropriate.
- Staff mark pupils' workbooks regularly and give clear indicators of what to improve, including spelling, grammar and punctuation. They often give additional problems to solve in mathematics. Less consistent is the insistence and opportunity for pupils to act upon the guidance. Homework is a regular feature and is contributing well to learning.
- Pupils know their targets for writing and numeracy and what to improve. The regular mentoring

sessions when adults talk through progress with individual pupils are helping to encourage pupils' motivation and ambition.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Across the school relationships between staff and pupils are highly supportive and behaviour is exceptionally well managed so that pupils are happily busy in lessons.
- Pupils enjoy learning. Their positive attitudes to learning support their improving progress. They apply themselves well to tasks, concentrate well and are keen to succeed. They can work independently, without the direct guidance of an adult, in most lessons. Just occasionally, pupils lose focus and do not keep up a good pace of learning when working on their own.
- Pupils get a great deal from working alongside each other and discussing their work in pairs. They are very supportive of each other and quick to help each other out.
- Behaviour in assemblies and at lunchtimes and as pupils move around the school is often exemplary. Pupils enjoy the family-type arrangements at lunchtimes when younger and older pupils sit together and get to know each other well. Older pupils are proud of their roles as helpers and take on different roles with maturity, from helping to clear up the dining area to playing with younger children at playtimes.
- Pupils report that behaviour has improved a great deal over the past year and that incidents of bullying are rare. They know about different types of bullying and know what to do to seek help should it occur.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in many different situations, including when using modern technology. They feel safe in school and very well cared for by teachers and other staff.
- Parents are happy that their children are kept safe and that behaviour in the school is well-managed. Parents recognise the many ways that the school has improved since the previous inspection.
- The number of incidents of exclusions has reduced significantly and these are now infrequent.
- There are case studies of the school supporting pupils newly arrived at the school effectively so that they settle in and are supported in overcoming barriers to learning they may face.
- Attendance is broadly average.
- The school council is effective and takes responsibility for organising play equipment at lunchtimes.

Leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because, although teaching and achievement are improving, they are not yet securely good over time. Some leaders are new to their role and have not developed the skills or had the time to make improvements quickly, particularly for Early Years Foundation Stage, special educational needs and literacy.
- The executive headteachers, with the support of school leaders, staff and governors have a strong commitment to, and are clearly on the road to, improving pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. Staff morale is good.
- Leaders, governors and staff have established a supportive, friendly and welcoming school where pupils feel safe and keen to learn and parents feel welcomed.
- Leaders have put in place effective systems to check on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. School improvement planning is informed by rigorous checks on progress and teaching so that weaknesses are being tackled effectively.
- Electronic systems to aid the analysis of checks on pupils' progress are not fully established. The gathering of useful information on pupils' progress is not always efficient or detailed enough to provide useful analysis of the progress of different groups of students at different points in the school year. The school has recognised this and has plans to develop appropriate systems.

- The performance of staff is monitored closely and they are held accountable for pupils' progress.
- Professional development is closely focused on the school's priorities and is starting to make a difference to pupils' achievement. Increasingly, staff are leading professional development that is resulting in improvements, for example to performance in mathematics and the management of pupils' involvement in learning and behaviour. Outstanding practice in teaching and the management of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning is not yet shared extensively enough within the school.
- The curriculum is well planned to support progress in literacy and numeracy. The topic work planned motivates pupils but opportunities to practise and improve writing and numeracy skills in other subjects are not used to full advantage.
- The curriculum and the overall school ethos promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well indeed.
- Pupils appreciate the many more chances they have to take part in sporting competition and activities this year and some are enjoying success in local competitions. The School Sport Funding is being used very effectively to increase significantly the numbers of pupils involved in competitive sport and dance in all key stages.
- Parents recognise the improvements that are taking place in the school. Some have taken part in and appreciated workshops on how best to support their children's learning in mathematics.
- The local authority is making a significant contribution to school improvement. They have supported the appointments of the effective executive headteachers. They have provided strong and effective support for the professional development of leaders and staff. They provide effective external independent review that supports improvement planning.
- Good partnerships are established with other schools through links with executive headteachers. Pupils are involved in a project whereby they are taking on responsibility for establishing the school as a positive and supportive place for every pupil.
- The school knows individual pupils well and does a great deal to assure their well-being. Each pupil receives weekly individual guidance, through the school's recently established assertive mentoring programme, on how they can improve their work. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils and staff meet current government requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are strongly committed to improving the school. They provide a good balance of challenge and support to leaders and staff through a period of turbulence in the leadership of the school.
 - Governors have been proactive in working effectively with the local authority and the diocese to bring some stability to leadership through the appointment of experienced and effective executive headteachers. They recognise the urgency with which the school requires a substantive headteacher but are, wisely, ensuring they appoint the most appropriate candidate.
 - Governors are well informed of how well pupils achieve and know the areas in which achievement needs improvement. They are fully informed of how pupil premium funding is spent and what difference it is making to these pupils' achievement.
 - Governors know about the quality of teaching across the school. They plan strategically to support weaker areas of progress, for example, through appointments of well-qualified and experienced staff to teach Year 4.
 - Governors are fully aware of how school sport funding has been spent and are delighted with the impact it has had on improving participation of pupils in sport and dance.
 - Governors are committed to checking on the performance of the school. Many governors visit the school each term for governor monitoring days. They check for themselves on how well the school is performing and improving. They consult the school council regularly.
 - Governors bring a good range of skills to their roles. They are conscientious in keeping updated and trained. They recognise that they have developed their skills significantly through working with the local authority, the diocese and the executive headteachers.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	105219
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	426079

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marguerita Leyden
Headteacher	Paul Heaton
Date of previous school inspection	29 February 2012
Telephone number	01204 333111
Fax number	01204 333112
Email address	office@holy-infants.bolton.sch.uk

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