

# Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School, Blackburn

Lynwood Road, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB2 6HQ

**Inspection dates** 11–12 December 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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 and progress are not fast enough, especially in writing. Pupils' skills in writing are not improving quickly enough to close the gap between their attainment and national expectations.
- Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply the skills they have learned in mathematics.
- In some lessons, teachers do not check that tasks challenge most-able pupils to achieve as much as they can.
- Teachers do not consistently make effective use of the time allocated for pupils to reflect and improve their work in response to comments written on their work.
- Actions taken by leaders to improve teaching and pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics have not yet removed the inconsistencies.
- The large change in staffing has meant that previous improvements to the quality of teaching and achievement have not been sustained over time.

### The school has the following strengths

- The improvements in pupils' reading skills are significant and pupils now consistently achieve above average standards in reading.
- Pupils get a flying start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where they make particularly good progress in Reception.
- Pupils are keen to learn and form good relationships with staff and each other. They feel safe, are happy and behave well.
- Pupils are helped particularly well by good quality support staff and teaching assistants.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance and know what needs to be done. They are working hard to minimise disruptions for pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- Since the previous inspection, the school has undergone a period of significant change in staffing. During this inspection, some of the staff who were observed teaching were on long-term or short-term supply contracts.
- Inspectors observed 11 lessons, and looked at pupils' books in all classes and subjects. Inspectors also took account of books from the last academic year.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, the Interim Executive Board, representatives from the diocese and the local authority, and with pupils.
- There were technical issues with the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) website, inspectors met with parents and took phone calls and letters to assess their views.
- A large number of documents were analysed, including the school's improvement plan, self-evaluation, data on the current progress of pupils and records of attendance and punctuality. Documents relating to behaviour and safeguarding were also seen.

## Inspection team

Rebecca Lawton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Marilyn Massey	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has gone through a period of continual disruption, including a complete change of teaching staff. The school has faced significant contextual issues, including an uncertain future and governance is currently in the process of changing from an interim executive board to a governing body.
- At the time of the inspection, a significant number of staff were recent new appointments to the school, a third are new to teaching and some were supply teachers on fixed-term contracts.
- The school is slightly smaller than the average size primary school and does not have a nursery.
- The majority of pupils come from Indian or Pakistani heritage and a high proportion (more than two-thirds) speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below 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 who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards which set the expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in the most recent set of published results.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to increase the rate of pupils' progress, especially in writing and mathematics, by:
  - making full use of the assessment information to ensure that the most able pupils are sufficiently challenged
  - improving the consistency of marking so that pupils know how well they are doing and make full use of the time given to respond to teachers' advice for improvement
  - ensuring pupils become more accurate in their basic skills in writing and have more opportunities to write at length and in all subjects
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to apply their mathematical skills, both in mathematics and other subjects.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by:
  - stabilising the staffing situation in the school so that actions to improve teaching and achievement can be consistently applied and have more impact over time on outcomes for pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics is inconsistent across the school. Pupils do not consistently make the progress expected of them and not enough make more than the expected progress.
- The school's data show that progress varies too much between year groups, especially in writing and mathematics. Where progress does accelerate, due to effective interventions and changes in teaching, this progress is then not sustained for the majority of pupils in the following year.
- Attainment when pupils leave Year 6 is above average in reading, almost in line with the national average in mathematics and below average in writing.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' mathematical achievement has been erratic over time. Attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is improving but is not yet in line with the national average. Successful policies that have secured improvement in the past have had to be started again with new staff, leading to an inconsistent pattern of progress over time. Teachers, this year have focused on improving pupils' skills in calculation. This has improved pupils' ability to complete calculations correctly but many lack confidence to apply their skills. Pupils do not always have enough opportunity to try them out in other subjects.
- Pupils' writing skills in Key Stage 1 are weak. They have improved over the last three years, although attainment is not yet in line with the national average. More pupils are now achieving the higher levels because the additional adults in Key Stage 1 are supporting pupils' writing effectively.
- In Key Stage 2, many pupils' writing skills are not at the level expected for their age. The disruption in the teaching of basic skills has led to the gap to reach the expected level for their age not closing quickly enough. The most-able pupils, in particular, stall in their progress. Teachers do not ensure pupils have enough time to practise and become accurate in their basic skills through writing at length in subjects other than English.
- Reading is above average and progress is at least good because of more effective teaching. In Key Stage 1, pupils are taught how to identify sounds and letters particularly well, and in the Year 2 reading test are now achieving results above the national average. Children's emerging reading skills are good and they are able to use a range of techniques to work out new words. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils read well and with fluency and expression. They enjoy reading and are keen to discuss their favourite authors.
- Children start in Reception with skills and abilities well below those expected for their age, particularly in language and communication skills and in personal and social development. They make good progress in Reception and leave the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills much closer to those expected for their age.
- Overall, the progress of the most-able pupils is similar to other pupils. It is good in reading but not fast enough in mathematics and writing. Teachers do not always ensure that work is hard enough and not enough pupils reach the higher levels by the time they leave Year 6.
- The progress of those pupils with special educational needs and those speaking English as an additional language varies between classes. These groups make good progress where effective adult support is available. Over time from entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 6 they make expected progress.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make similar progress to their peers. They make least progress in writing and attainment is below what is expected for these pupils. Attainment in mathematics is also below average, although there are signs that the gap is closing. In reading, the gap is closing more rapidly and more pupils achieve above the level expected.
- The school provides a harmonious community but overall equality of opportunity is not fully effective because of inconsistency between pupils of different abilities and across different classes.

**The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies too much between classes and although some good teaching was seen, over time teaching requires improvement. There have been significant changes to staffing, meaning that approaches vary between classes and skills taught in one class are not always built on in the next. This means that pupils do not always extend their learning in lessons and their progress slows especially in writing and mathematics.
- In too many lessons, teachers do not use assessment effectively. Consequently, more-able pupils are not challenged enough to extend their learning.
- Assessment of pupils' progress has not always been accurate in the past. Systems to improve assessment have had to be re-established due to the large number of new staff, and inconsistencies remain.
- Time is given over to pupils each week to look at the marking and advice teachers have given to pupils, and in literacy books pupils are starting to respond to this advice and make improvements. This is less well established in other subjects and the quality of marking and advice varies too much across subjects.
- Teachers are now focusing more closely on pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics, but do not create enough opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills across other subjects.
- Teaching assistants support pupils' learning well, and pupils benefit from good quality relationships.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge when teaching reading. Letters and sounds are taught successfully and older pupils have time to research information and use their increasing skills.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Teachers secure a good start for children and high quality additional support is put in place for those children with skills and abilities below those expected for their age. The development of their speaking and listening skills is particularly well supported; a language specialist has supported teachers to improve their questions and resources to improve children's development of communication.
- In effective lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers use good resources and plan for a wide range of ability levels, so that all pupils are supported and challenged to make the best progress possible. Lessons are interesting and pupils are enthusiastic learners. Within classrooms, there is a good working atmosphere and pupils value and celebrate each other's successes.
- In most lessons, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well so that learning takes place in an orderly atmosphere.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils are keen to learn, and are respectful to all staff. They welcome challenge and work hard, with a genuine desire to succeed.
- Pupils have good manners and conduct themselves sensibly around the school, even when there are no adults present. They understand how to keep themselves safe and value good behaviour.
- Attendance is below average, although it is rising. Religious observance and extended holidays continue to affect the attendance of a significant number of pupils. The school applies strong action to stress to parents the importance of their children's regular attendance and many do attend regularly.
- A minority of pupils are persistently late, and the school has robust processes in place to monitor and react to these occasions.
- Pupils say they are aware of different types of bullying, although they say it does not happen in school. They know who to report to and are confident staff will deal effectively with any issues

they may have.

- Pupils care for each other, with older pupils take leading roles at playtimes, ensuring everyone has someone to play with and making sure no one is unkind. During the inspection, it was noted several times that older pupils looked after younger pupils without being prompted by an adult, for example, when clearing up at lunch time or when trying to reach a book or a coat.

## The leadership and management

## requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because actions have not been effective in stabilising the quality of teaching and ensuring that pupils make good progress. Success has been evident in the past, but not built upon because staff have left and new members arrived. The impact of the changes put in place by leaders and the interim executive board have been limited by the high turnover of teaching staff.
- Senior leaders have now gained an accurate view of the areas that need to improve, and the actions planned to secure these improvements are detailed and realistic. The monitoring of pupils' progress is becoming more reliable, although staff do not always make the best use of this information when planning future work.
- The constant change in staffing has made monitoring the quality of teaching difficult. Aspects to improve are identified but staff often move or new teachers arrive before actions are in place and so weaker aspects especially in teaching writing and mathematics remain.
- Nevertheless, teachers' performance is now linked closely to pay and to pupils' achievement. New policies and processes make staff more accountable for the progress pupils make. However, these systems are at an early stage of development for the majority of the current staff, only one of whom has been through a full cycle.
- The curriculum includes all subjects and provides a balance of academic, physical and creative activities. However, lessons are not always sufficiently adapted so that the more able are consistently challenged, and the less able are supported in all subjects. Pupils' skills in writing and mathematics are not fully promoted in other subjects.
- Teachers extend the curriculum well, giving pupils a broad range of interesting experiences to encourage them to speak and write, such as trips, visiting speakers, and community activities, such as the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 'Christmas decorations' sensory walk. These experiences promote effectively pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils share their different cultures and experiences and enjoy good relationships.
- The school makes good use of its cluster partners and the Primary School Sports funding to provide high-quality sports provision by specialist staff, and to provide a broad range of extra-curricular and extended school opportunities, such as the Children's University.
- Parents have mixed views about the school. Most were supportive of the school generally, but some had concerns over the consistency of staff and long-term vision for the school.
- Links with the local authority are well established. Several members of the interim executive work within the local authority and this has helped to improve strategic planning during a time of extreme change.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The school has had an interim executive board for an extended period of time. The move to appoint a permanent governing body is already underway. The board has successfully helped the school to improve and to maintain staffing and resources during a period of significant change.
  - The board has included local authority representatives and as such has had an ongoing input into the governance of the school, including the evaluation of the school's spending of the pupil premium and Primary School Sports funding. Governors are aware that this money is beneficial to those pupils eligible for such funding, and also to extending the skills of staff in teaching sport.
  - Members of the board are now better informed about the quality of teaching and by reviewing

data are in a better position to challenge the school. This knowledge has increased with the change of governors and the improved balance of expertise, which has enabled members to ask more challenging questions.

- Board members have managed finances well and have maintained good resources and the most consistent provision possible in difficult circumstances. There has been effective management of spending in areas that have directly improved pupils' achievement, for example, in the teaching of reading and literacy.
- Board members have ensured that safeguarding and child protection meet all current requirements.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119510
<b>Local authority</b>	Blackburn with Darwen
<b>Inspection number</b>	424601

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	194
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nicholas Kennedy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Humma Ahmed
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 May 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 54851
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