

# St Richard's Roman Catholic Primary School, Atherton

Flapper Fold Lane, Atherton, Manchester, M46 0HA

## Inspection dates

27–28 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress. Not enough achieve the higher levels of attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Some pupils have lost ground because of previous underachievement, notably in Key Stage 1, and have not made up gaps in their learning. As a result, standards by the end of Year 2 are below average.
- During some activities, pupils are not challenged and focused because work is not precisely matched to their abilities, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Some pupils have not grasped basic skills in numeracy and literacy and therefore struggle to carry out investigations and solve problems in mathematics or to write at length in different subjects.
- The school's self-evaluation by leaders and governors is over-generous and systems to track pupils' progress are not straightforward.
- Identification of pupils' starting points in Year 1 is not precise enough to assess rates of progress reliably.
- Outcomes for children in the early years require improvement because progress is not fast enough to raise some children's skills so that they achieve a good level of development.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school is a welcoming and attractive place to be and pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils say that they feel safe and their parents agree.
- The quality of teaching has been strengthened by leaders and governors through effective actions to tackle weaknesses in teaching.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good.
- Pupils are keen to learn and the promotion of their spiritual, social, cultural and moral development is good.
- The school has improved and is still improving because of raised expectations and positive actions by leaders to improve teaching and raise achievement.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors and senior leaders observed a wide range of lessons and pupils' work across the school.
- They held discussions with the headteacher and deputy headteachers, staff, a representative from the local authority, governors and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 14 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the school's surveys of parents' views and responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed school policies, information about pupils' achievement, subject plans, and the school's view of its effectiveness, pupils' work and school planning for improvement.

## Inspection team

Marie Cordey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Carol Machell

Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.*

### Information about this school

- St. Richard's is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. A small number come from minority ethnic backgrounds. A number of pupils join the school at other than the usual times.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of students known to be disadvantaged and therefore supported through the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium funding is additional government funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and those that are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled and have special educational needs is above average.
- A significant number of staff have left or joined the school, particularly in the last 18 months.

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

- Raise pupils' achievement across the school, particularly in Key Stage 1 and for the most able pupils by:
  - ensuring that teachers' planning is at the right level for different groups of pupils, especially the most able, and makes up any gaps in pupils' learning effectively
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length
  - building on pupils' learning to enable them to apply their knowledge consistently to more challenging work, such as investigational work and problem-solving in mathematics.
- Strengthen leadership and management, including governance, by:
  - ensuring that the school's self-evaluation provides a more accurate picture of how well the school is performing
  - precisely identifying pupils' starting points in Year 1 and ensuring that all staff share straightforward records to track pupils' progress in all classes
- Improve provision in the early years by:
  - ensuring that opportunities for children to learn, particularly outdoors, are carefully planned to promote children's enthusiasm and curiosity and develop their early writing, reading and number skills.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management

### requires improvement

- While leaders and governors have secured significant improvements in teaching, in mathematics and in pupils' achievement in the past 18 months, their actions have not yet resulted in good achievement or teaching, especially for the most able pupils, nor have they raised standards significantly for pupils at the end of Year 2.
- Progress was not fast enough in mathematics for Year 6 pupils in the 2014 national tests. Leaders tackled this as a matter of urgency and currently pupils make expected progress in mathematics from their individual starting points at the beginning of Year 1. Teaching in mathematics has been improved through extending teachers' knowledge and tailored professional training.
- Following significant changes in staffing, weaknesses in teaching have been tackled. Staff are united in their commitment to school improvement, backing the headteacher's and governors' ambitions for good and better outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders and governors demonstrate their capacity to improve St. Richard's further because of the improvements in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Equality of opportunity is reflected in the similar rates of progress made by most groups of pupils and in the good achievement of pupils with special educational needs.
- Challenging targets are set for pupils' achievement. . However, because the tracking of pupils' progress is not precise enough these targets do not always match pupils' starting points and the pace of their progress.
- The broader curriculum is providing a richer range of subjects. Although this is quite new, pupils enjoy studying the wide range of subjects, particularly art, computer studies and science. The curriculum is designed to address misunderstandings and gaps in learning. This is beginning to happen and good progress is being made in some classes after a legacy of earlier underachievement. Literacy and numeracy skills are emphasised and focused upon, especially in English and mathematics, although this is not as secure across different subjects.
- The management of behaviour is effective in ensuring that pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils and their parents believe that behaviour is good. The school works effectively to challenge discrimination and foster good relationships.
- Professional training, measures to hold staff to account for pupils' achievement and robust support and challenge, have improved the quality of teaching and led to rising standards. Performance management arrangements are tightly focused on the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils. If these are not met, staff do not progress to the next salary level.
- The pupil premium is used appropriately to narrow gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils. However, the progress of disadvantaged pupils was not as good as that of other pupils in the 2014 tests for Year 6 pupils.
- The school is making good use of the primary sport funding. Partnership with the Wigan Athletic sports programme supports the teaching of physical education skills and the school provides a wide range of sports clubs after school. Pupils link their learning in sport to living healthily and eating sensibly. Staff, pupils and visitors comment on the good quality and tastiness of school lunches.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well by leaders and pupils' courtesy, along with their appreciation of diversity and British values, prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- The school has received intense, thorough support from the local authority. Partnership with local schools and a Local Leader of Education have supported leaders to improve the school's effectiveness. Middle leaders' roles as subject leaders have been strengthened by some new appointments and through clear expectations of their performance.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are committed and routinely involved in the life of the school. New members have helped to strengthen governance which critically challenges the school's performance. Governors recognise what the school does well and what requires improvement, although their evaluation of the school's effectiveness is over-generous. They take part in regular and frequent training to increase their knowledge and improve their effectiveness. Governors are clear about procedures to safeguard pupils and these meet statutory requirements. Finances are managed astutely and the use of the primary sport funding secures good outcomes in pupils' knowledge and awareness of healthy lifestyles and participation in physical education. Although there were wider gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the 2014 tests, this does not reflect the picture of narrowing gaps across the school. Governors take time and care to apportion pupil premium funding to support

the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are eager conversationalists and very polite.
- Pupils are tolerant and encouraged to value and appreciate people from different backgrounds. They study different religions and quietly reflect on moral and social issues in assemblies, the prayer room and at 'prayer points' throughout the school.
- Relationships between pupils and with staff are a strength of the school. Pupils know that they are valued as individuals. They listen carefully in lessons and only occasionally become restless.
- The new behaviour code is understood by pupils, who appreciate and act on clear expectations of behaviour. They are enthusiastic about gaining rewards and say that their learning is rarely interrupted by poor behaviour.
- Pupils are very keen to take on positions of responsibility. School councillors are knowledgeable, proud and very involved in improving their school. They communicate the views of other pupils to senior leaders who listen carefully and act on many of their suggestions.
- Pupils' attendance has been below average and persistent absence is above national averages. Good systems to improve attendance, through involvement with pupils and their families, have helped to improve pupils' attendance to average. Rates of persistent absence are not low enough as yet and the school is working on this as a matter of priority.
- Pupils' thoughtfulness, sense of fair play and good manners reflect the school's strong and effective emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

#### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and their parents agree. Lessons, assemblies and focused theme weeks on e-safety and cyber-bullying make sure that pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- Pupils know how to live healthily through physical education lessons emphasising fitness and healthy eating and through a programme of lessons teaching pupils how to look after themselves.
- Procedures to keep pupils safe are effective and regularly reviewed by leaders and governors. The headteacher and governors ensure that the school premises are safe.

### The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because, over time, it has not been good enough to ensure that pupils make good or better progress, particularly in Key Stage 1 and for more able pupils. Nevertheless, teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection and much is now good, enabling more pupils to make better-than-expected progress.
- While teaching has improved and progress has accelerated in many classes, this has not led to some pupils catching up on previous gaps in their learning. Where basic skills are not built on and reinforced, pupils struggle to move on to higher levels in their work. Mechanical skills in mathematics have been improved and make pupils more ready for tests, although pupils are not prepared consistently well to solve mathematical problems or apply their mathematical learning effectively in investigational work.
- The improved teaching of reading and writing is beginning to raise pupils' standards, especially in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs learn well and make good progress. Teachers identify those pupils' particular learning needs quickly and accurately and plan effective work with teaching assistants to hasten pupils' progress and develop their knowledge and understanding.
- Leaders' focus on improving the quality of assessment and day-to-day marking has resulted in improvements. Pupils' work is marked regularly and routinely includes guidance for improvement. This is not always checked on quickly enough to establish whether pupils have acted on their teachers' advice.
- Pupils want to learn and enjoy settling down to work for the most part. They say that improvements in the management of behaviour mean that there are now very few interruptions to their learning. Occasionally, when pupils are not wholly concentrated on their work, it is because explanations are not clear enough or the work is not closely matched to their ability.

**The achievement of pupils****requires improvement**

- Overall, pupils make expected progress. Starting points vary and pupils in Key Stage 2 left Key Stage 1 with average attainment and reach standards in line with national averages by the end of Year 6. Pupils start Year 1 with a variety of starting points but the current Year 1 started with standards that were below average and have made steady progress during Key Stage 1. However, achievement overall requires improvement because it is not yet consistent, especially in Key Stage 1.
- There is evidence of more pupils making good progress in Key Stage 2, especially in reading and writing. The headteacher led a re-design of the curriculum so that it provides more breadth and learning in different subjects increasing pupils' knowledge in other subjects as well as providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is rising and is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Certainly, an emphasis on improving pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar is leading to improvements. Pupils' opportunities to write at greater length are more limited, although a focus on pupils' speaking skills is making writing more lively and creative. Pupils relish the chance to set their minds to investigational work in mathematics. When pupils have not grasped basic mathematical skills and understanding earlier on in school, they find it difficult to work things out and solve mathematical problems.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 although rising are below average and have been for a number of years and pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar were weak across subjects. A significant and effective drive to improve pupils' abilities to link sounds and letters in Years 1 and 2 has led to a substantial rise in the numbers of pupils meeting the standards set in the phonics national screening test. This is the cornerstone for improvements in pupils' reading and writing although it is too early to see the impact of this in Year 2 assessments.
- Gaps in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils have narrowed overall because of a focus on their achievement by leaders and governors and improved teaching. In the 2014 tests at the end of Year 6, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils compared to other pupils in the school and nationally was about a term behind in writing, two terms behind in reading and four terms behind in mathematics.
- Specialist support, carefully crafted intervention and an ethos of care contribute to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs making good progress. Pupils who join the school at other than the usual times make expected rates of progress similar to those of all pupils. Their personal development is emphasised as well as their academic achievement to make sure that they attend school regularly, feel secure and are ready to learn.
- Most-able pupils make similar progress to other pupils. The results of the 2014 national tests for Year 6 pupils showed the proportion reaching the higher levels was below average. Teachers do not always challenge these pupils enough to ensure they always make as much progress as possible. However, more pupils in Year 6 are on track to reach the higher Levels 5 and 6. This reflects a strong leadership focus and improved teaching. Progress is slower in Year 2, but, nevertheless, pupils are on track to raise their standards at the end of Year 2 this year.

**The early years provision****requires improvement**

- Children's achievement requires improvement. From starting points that are typically below average for their age, children make progress typical for this age but few make more than this. By the time children leave the early years the proportion attaining a good level of development is below national figures and children are not fully prepared for Year 1.
- Children enjoy learning, particularly in the many activities provided for them indoors. They are beginning to improve their early writing and number skills, although this is not as consistent when children learn outdoors because there are fewer creative opportunities for them to practise their writing. At times, opportunities to encourage and guide children to write and read outdoors are not seized by staff.
- Children with special educational needs make expected progress in their learning, in line with other children. They are carefully supported to make sure that their needs are met by caring staff.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement. Teachers and support staff work hard to provide opportunities to engage children in learning but these are not monitored consistently to ensure that each child is learning well. Consequently, some children do not settle to taking part in an activity or are reluctant to take turns using equipment or toys. Good teaching of 'phonics', for example, in the 'Sounds Disco' is greatly enjoyed by children who eagerly and rhythmically sound out letters in song.
- Children's behaviour and safety are good. Children know that they are valued as individuals and respond

well to the good examples of manners and courtesy set by staff. They tidy up after themselves and have settled down well in school. Occasionally, when learning is not closely matched to their interests or abilities, children's interest flags and they are less involved in their activities.

- Leadership and management require improvement. Children's achievement is not good enough for them to attain a good level of development. Nevertheless, the teaching of letters and sounds is improving their achievement in early reading and writing.

## 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>	106498
<b>Local authority</b>	Wigan
<b>Inspection number</b>	453779

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>	167
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Catherine Price
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dawn Nulty
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 September 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01942 882980
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<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@admin.saintrichards.wigan.sch.uk

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