

St Bartholomew's Catholic Primary School

School Lane, Rainhill, Prescot, Merseyside, L35 6NN

Inspection dates 10–11 June 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- St Bartholomew's is a welcoming school where all pupils are nurtured and well-cared for.
- The executive headteacher provides clear and strong leadership to improve pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. She is supported well by the deputy headteacher, governors, staff and parents.
- Governance of the school is good. Governors know how well the school is performing and use that knowledge to challenge the leadership to make further improvements.
- The quality of teaching is typically good with some outstanding practice. Clear priorities have been identified to speed up progress even further and, as a result, pupils achieve well from their starting points. Currently pupils in Years 6 are working at a level well-above average.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils of all abilities, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour make a strong contribution to their learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. The strong emphasis on promoting pupils' understanding of values such as honesty and fairness prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of learning activities, including visits that broaden their experiences. There are many occasions when pupils can take on responsibilities and can participate in a whole range of sporting and musical activities.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching does not yet result in outstanding achievement. The work set does not always provide enough challenge, especially for the most able pupils, so that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers' marking and feedback does not always inform pupils of how to improve their work.
- Pupils do not always respond to teachers' marking in order to improve their work.
- The early years requires improvement because information about children's progress is not used effectively enough to plan activities to support children to make better than expected progress from their starting points.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, of which four were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised the quality of work in pupils' books accompanied by the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors visited the after-school club and observed pupils' behaviour during break times and lunchtimes.
- Many discussions were held with pupils as they worked in lessons and a number of pupils were heard read.
- Inspectors took account of the 70 responses to Ofsted's online parents' questionnaire (Parent View) and discussions that took place informally with parents.
- Inspectors observed the school's work throughout the day and looked at a number of documents including, the school's own information on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, school self-evaluation, records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Information from the 20 responses to the staff questionnaire was taken into account.

Inspection team

Elisabeth Fenwick, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Steve Rigby	Additional Inspector
Prydwen Elfed-Owens	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Bartholomew's Catholic Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- There have been many staff changes since the last inspection, including the recent appointment of three newly qualified teachers.
- The school has been led by an executive headteacher since September 2012. The current executive headteacher has been in post since September 2013. She is also the executive headteacher of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Billinge, St Helens.
- In April 2015 an appointment was made of an assistant headteacher, who is also the early years leader.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported by the pupil premium, is much lower than the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- Children in the early years are taught in two Reception classes on a full-time basis.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The school offers breakfast and after-school clubs managed by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching and increase the rate at which pupils make progress, particularly that of the most able, by making sure that teachers:
 - challenge pupils, especially the most able, by consistently setting demanding work in lessons
 - ensure marking and feedback inform pupils of exactly how they can improve their work and that pupils act on the guidance in their teachers' marking.
- Support children to make more rapid progress in the early years by making more effective use of information about their progress to plan activities that build more carefully on what they already know and can do.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. The school has undergone some considerable changes in staffing and senior leadership which, since taking on the role of executive headteacher, she has managed extremely well. As a result, pupils' achievement remains good and is improving. She has the confidence of staff, governors, parents and the local authority. The school provides a positive climate for learning and ongoing improvement.
- The senior leadership effectively support staff in the school. The new assistant headteacher who has leadership of the early years has good plans to improve provision for children in that stage.
- The school is very ably led by the deputy headteacher during the periods when the executive headteacher is not present in school.
- Teachers new to the school, especially the newly qualified teachers, are well supported by the more experienced staff and this helps all staff to share and learn from effective practice.
- There are thorough and effective systems in place to check on teaching, learning and the progress pupils make. As a result leaders have an accurate view of the school. Middle leaders have clearly defined roles and are supporting whole-school improvement well.
- Performance management is carried out systematically and is closely linked to teachers' salary award and training. Targets set for teachers are closely linked to pupils' progress and are challenging.
- The school checks that all pupils have equality of opportunity to succeed. Overall, the needs of all groups of pupils are identified promptly and support is provided where most needed; however, the more able pupils do not always receive enough challenge in their work to help them make more rapid progress. For example, the pupil premium funding is used effectively to support the good progress made by the small number of disadvantaged pupils.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and is very successful in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, which is strength of the school. Pupils enjoy an exciting curriculum, which gives them many opportunities to be creative. High-quality singing heard during the inspection was clearly very much enjoyed by all those participating. Pupils have recently worked on a wonderful mosaic, which tells the story of the values which underpin the school's work and demonstrates their creative talents to the full.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They are given positions of responsibility such as being on the school council and as prefects. Pupils learn about democracy through taking part in events such as the St Helen's democracy week. They are taught to respect others. Leaders ensure that there is no discrimination against anyone in the school.
- The school uses the primary school sport funding effectively to develop pupils' abilities in a wide variety of sports. All groups of pupils have access to the full range of sporting activities and participation levels have increased.
- Safeguarding is given a high priority and regular assessments are made to ensure pupils are kept safe. Arrangements meet statutory requirements and the site is secure.
- The local authority has a good relationship with the school. While it has only provided light touch support in the past, it has recently provided support in facilitating the appointment of an executive headteacher, pending the appointment of a permanent headteacher.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly committed to St Bartholomew's. It is an experienced governing body, which has a clear overview of the school's strengths and areas that could be improved. Governors are kept very well informed through the detailed reports they receive from the school, but also by regularly visiting the school and talking to staff. They have undertaken an external review of governance by a national leader of governance and have acted on recommendations made. They are skilled in analysing data and are knowledgeable about how the school is performing in comparison to others; consequently, they are well equipped to provide leaders with strong levels of challenge.
 - Governors are knowledgeable about the quality of teaching and set targets in managing the performance of the executive headteacher. They work closely alongside the governors of the school of which she is the permanent headteacher, and make sure any staff pay awards are related to pupils' progress.
 - Statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding. Governors engage well with staff, pupils and parents.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils move about the school in a calm, orderly way and they are exceptionally polite, friendly and respectful.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, around the school and at lunchtimes and playtimes. They show great care and consideration for each other. Pupils like their teachers and come to school eager to learn. Their enjoyment of school is very apparent.
- The positive attitudes pupils of all ages have towards learning make a good contribution toward their progress and the standards they achieve. Pupils respond positively to teachers' high expectations of their behaviour.
- Pupils willingly take on a range of responsibilities such as prefect duty. The school council is active in gathering pupils' views on the improvements they would like to see in school, such as increasing the number of activities to do at lunchtimes.
- There are a very small number of pupils at the school who sometimes find it difficult to manage their own behaviour. However, they are well supported by staff and their behaviour rarely prevents learning from taking place.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The school's systems and practice to ensure that pupils, including children in the early years, are safe at all times are highly effective.
- Pupils are well aware of the different forms of bullying and told inspectors that when bullying happened it was dealt with quickly by a 'special' teacher. They know that name calling, inappropriate language or any form of discrimination are not tolerated and are aware of the consequences of such behaviour. Buddies support pupils at playtimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors viewed a wide range of evidence, including having a discussion with the learning mentor, which shows that bullying and racist incidents are rare and that when they happen appropriate measures are put in place.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, for instance, when using the internet.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View believe their children feel safe at school.
- Attendance for most pupils is above the national average for primary schools. This reflects how much pupils enjoy being at school and the positive way in which the school works with parents.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is typically good across the school with some outstanding practice. This is reflected in pupils' good progress over time in reading, writing and mathematics. The work seen in pupils' books, the school's records on checking the quality of teaching and inspection evidence confirm this.
- Most teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and plan accordingly. However, on occasions, teachers do not plan work that is hard enough for the most able pupils and so the progress of some pupils is not as rapid as it might be.
- The teaching of phonics (linking sounds and letters) is good and sets pupils off to a good start in their reading and writing. Pupils are encouraged to read often and widely and many are enthusiastic about their reading. Excellent questioning in one reading session inspired a group of pupils to enthusiastically express their opinions and feelings about the book they were reading.
- The teaching of writing is good. Pupils write confidently, fluently and at length in different subjects as well as in English. They benefit from opportunities to share ideas and talk through what they intend to write.
- In mathematics, pupils learn best when they are given challenging problems to solve. Pupils are taught basic numeracy skills well and, when they are given opportunities to do so, are able to apply them to a variety of problems. As a result standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 have improved rapidly since the last inspection and good levels of attainment have been maintained and improved on at the end of Year 6.
- Teaching assistants provide good support to pupils, especially for those who need extra help. They have contributed well to the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. However, teachers' marking does not always follow the school's own marking policy and inform pupils of what they need to do to improve their work. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' marking and make the improvements required. As a result pupils, particularly the most able, are not making rapid enough progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- From broadly typical starting points on entering Reception, pupils achieve well by the time they leave the school.
- Results from the 2014 national screening check on phonics showed the attainment of Year 1 pupils to be above the national average. Currently, Year 1 pupils are working to similar standards. This has a positive impact on pupils' reading. Year 2 pupils read confidently, with enthusiasm and expression, and use their phonics skills well to tackle unfamiliar words. Pupils' good grounding in phonics also helps them approach their writing confidently in Year 1 and Year 2.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 is above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2014 attainment at the end of Year 6 was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, progress was similar to the national average because the most able pupils did not always make as much progress as they could. The leadership team successfully focused on improving the quality of teaching and the rate of pupils' progress in this key stage and so current pupils in Year 6 are working at a level which is well-above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 read well and with enthusiasm because of the good teaching they receive throughout the school.
- In 2014, the small number of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 made better progress than other pupils nationally in reading, but less progress in writing and mathematics. The school's own data show that currently these pupils are making at least good progress in all subjects across the school. In 2014, there were too few disadvantaged pupils to compare their attainment to others nationally or within the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported by highly skilled staff. Their progress, from low starting points, is good in all year groups because their learning needs are met. Overall the most able pupils achieve well. However, because the work in some classes does not, on occasions, provide them with sufficient challenge, they do not always make the rapid progress of which they are capable.

The early years provision requires improvement

- Children start in Reception with skills that are typical, and sometimes better, for their age. They make typical progress and most are ready for Year 1. However, information about children's achievements, when they leave Nursery, and their progress is not used effectively to plan activities to challenge children to make better than expected progress from their starting points. Consequently, not all children make as much progress as they should and this is why the early years provision requires improvement.
- The newly appointed leader has a clear vision for early years, but has not yet had time to fully implement the improvement plans.
- Children begin the school day happy to be in school. This is due to the established routines that are reinforced by all adults working in this area. All adults ensure children learn in a safe and caring environment and check daily provision to make sure it is safe to use. Children have access to a wide range of resources, including a large outdoor area. However, activities which are planned do not always challenge children and help them make greater gains in their learning. This is particularly the case when children are learning outdoors.
- There are good opportunities for children to develop their early skills of reading, writing and mathematics. In one activity, for instance, based on the theme of 'going on holiday' children were counting down the days to the holiday, which helped them understand, 'one less than'.
- The support for disadvantaged and disabled children or those with special educational needs is effective. These children are nurtured well and they make good progress.
- Children's behaviour and personal development are good. Children enjoy learning and the early years provision makes a good contribution to children's physical and emotional health and well-being as well as to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are given many opportunities to learn about other cultures, for instance, recently they have been learning about Chinese culture.
- There are close working relationships with parents and other early years providers. These ensure that children settle quickly into the Reception class and are well looked after.

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	104815
Local authority	St. Helens
Inspection number	461758

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	319
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Philip Swanson
Headteacher	Claire Cropper
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2012
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