

Holy Family Roman Catholic Primary School, Rochdale

Great Gates Road, Rochdale, Lancashire OL11 2DA

Inspection dates 1–2 December 2015

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils enter school with a spring in their step and a smile on their face because they feel very safe and enjoy their learning.
- Exceptional attitudes to learning, excellent conduct, plus respectful and caring relationships are the hallmark of pupils in this successful school.
- Attendance is above average for all groups. Very few pupils miss large chunks of time from school.
- Pupils read with fluency, understanding and enjoyment. Their outcomes in reading are consistently above average in all classes.
- Pupils make rapid progress across Key Stage 1 and catch up quickly from their lower than average starting points. They reach the levels expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge well to check pupils' understanding and iron out any muddled thinking.
- Teachers are relentless in their drive to help pupils succeed as readers and mathematicians through the successful teaching of basic skills.
- Strong leadership from the headteacher, supported by a reinvigorated governing body, is setting a clear course towards rapid improvement. Weaknesses are not ignored. Concerted action to improve the early years means more children are ready for the demands of Year 1 than in the past.
- Teachers are well supported in their quest to become the best. Clear targets for improvement and a wide range of training opportunities are helping all teachers to raise their game.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards at the end of Year 6 have declined since the last inspection.
- Pupils' achievement in writing lags behind their gains in reading and mathematics.
- Some pupils have limited opportunities to become creative writers and artists.
- Not all middle leaders are driving improvements to teaching and learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching of writing so that pupils' outcomes in this subject match their gains in reading and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring teachers help pupils to transfer their strong basic skills to sustained and extended pieces of writing
 - making sure teachers give pupils enough time and freedom to become young creative writers who produce imaginative work that appeals to a reader
 - seizing every opportunity to enhance pupils' writing across other subjects.
- Help pupils to develop their artistic skills by ensuring they have sufficient opportunities to study art in greater depth.
- Improve the quality of middle leadership so that all leaders are driving improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement within their area of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The dynamic and astute headteacher leads this successful school exceptionally well. She lives up to her own high standards and is an excellent role model for staff and pupils. She sets the tone for respectful relationships, pride in the school and a love of learning. She has the confidence and trust of everyone within the Holy Family community. Consequently, pupils are happy, staff morale is high and parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's work. Her reputation spills over the school gates. Her expertise is harnessed by the local authority to support other schools when the need arises.
- The headteacher knows the school's strengths and flaws exceedingly well. There are no blind spots because the systems to check on teaching and pupils' achievement are rigorous and effective. Weaker teaching is tackled vigorously and clear targets for improvement are helpful to all teachers in perfecting their practice. The effective management of teachers' performance is matched by a wide range of training opportunities which help teachers refresh their skills and learn from each other.
- Leaders do not shy away from shortcomings. Weaknesses are spotted and the wheels are set in motion to bring about change. Priorities for improvement are spot on and plans to drive improvement are crafted carefully to ensure actions make a difference to teaching and pupils' outcomes. This work is bearing fruit. Children's achievement in the early years has improved markedly and the dip in pupils' progress at the end of Key Stage 2, in 2014, has been tackled swiftly.
- This all points to strong capacity to bring about further success. Nonetheless, there is a sticking point; pupils' achievement in writing remains a thorny issue. This was identified as a weakness in the last inspection and it is still an area for improvement. However, the residual weaknesses in writing are not due to any tardiness by leaders. In fact, a considerable amount of work has taken place in the intervening years to tackle this ongoing issue. This has been successful in ensuring pupils have the basic skills to write, which in turn means almost all groups make better than expected progress in this subject.
- The impact of other leaders in driving improvement across the school is variable. Some are leading the way. They are having a positive influence on improving teaching and fostering pupils' readiness for life as British citizens. For example, the successful eco-school initiative is helping pupils to understand their role in caring for their surroundings. However, not all leaders are matching the best and some are only just off the starting line. This is partly due to recent changes in roles and responsibilities. Nevertheless, some leaders are not going far enough in taking on full ownership for their areas of responsibility to ensure all pupils are able to do their very best in all areas of learning.
- Additional government funding is used very well to help disadvantaged pupils have an equal chance to thrive. This extra money is used to support pupils' academic needs through effective small-group teaching sessions and additional adult support in class. Leaders are alert to any barriers that may cause pupils' progress to stall. As a result, funds are also used to support pupils' emotional and personal development so they are ready to learn. The positive impact of this work speaks for itself. Achievement gaps have closed at the end of Key Stage 1 and they are narrowing year-on-year by the time pupils leave Year 6.
- Sports premium funding is used equally well to provide a range of in-school and extra-curricular activities above and beyond the typical competitive team games which do not always appeal to everyone. Opportunities for dance, gymnastics and karate are meeting pupils' interests and galvanising their desire to be fit and healthy. Participation rates in physical activities are improving rapidly for all age groups.
- The curriculum has been designed thoughtfully to meet the learning needs of pupils. The systematic approach to honing pupils' basic skills is a key strength. The recently developed outdoor learning environment is going a long way in developing pupils' resilience, team work and ability to take measured risks. Good use is made of visits outside of school to enhance pupils' learning; for example, Year 3 were able to gain an insight into the life of Ancient Romans through their visit to York. Visiting experts are used well to make up for any gaps in teachers' expertise and to give pupils an opportunity to immerse themselves in projects such as art weeks. Subjects other than English and mathematics are included to ensure pupils can develop as well-rounded individuals. However, the more creative aspects of the curriculum are sometimes squeezed to make room for everything else that takes place.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed well through different subjects, building on the firm foundations of the Christian character of the school. Topics such as the American civil rights movement, multi-faith weeks and opportunities to visit other places of worship are helping pupils gain tolerance and respect for others. Reflective assemblies ensure pupils are aware of modern issues and consider the plight of others who are facing challenging times. Leaders and teachers are highly successful in

nurturing young people who are prepared well to take their place in modern Britain.

- Relationships with parents are positive. The school's own parental questionnaire indicates very high levels of satisfaction with every aspect of school. Nothing to dispute this positive picture came to light when talking to parents during the inspection. Communication is effective, including the information parents receive on their children's progress. Family mornings are well attended and enable parents to work and play with their children. This is helping parents to gain greater insight into pupils' learning at school.
- The local authority keeps an eye on the school but offer light-touch support. The school has been supported well by local authority representatives in their drive to establish school-to-school support across a cluster of local schools. This network is proving to be a useful tool in sharing good practice and pooling resources to tackle common issues.
- The school is harmonious and inclusive. Everyone is welcomed. Increasing numbers of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and pupils who speak English as an additional language are brought into the Holy Family community seamlessly. These pupils blossom as well as others because racial intolerance, name-calling or prejudice-based bullying is a rarity and equality of opportunity is promoted well day-in and day-out.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Members of the governing body have been re-energised by recent changes to their make-up, using this as an opportunity to rethink their role and the contribution they make to school life. They work well as a group, auditing their collective skills, attending training to make up for any shortfalls and ensuring the expertise of each member is used to best effect.
 - Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses because they frequently review school data, visit school, talk to pupils and teachers and receive honest and accurate information from the headteacher. They are not afraid to ask searching questions in order to gain an insight into pupils' achievement and well-being.
 - Governors have a realistic view of teaching because they are influential in making decisions about teachers' pay to ensure strong teaching is rewarded. They are alert to their statutory duties, including those around safeguarding, and ensure these are met in full.
 - A close watch on additional government funding means they can point to the positive difference this extra money is making to pupils' improving involvement in physical activity and the closing achievement gap for disadvantaged pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Clear systems, good record-keeping and frequent training for staff mean everyone is aware of their responsibility to protect pupils from harm. Staff know the procedures and have the confidence to take their concerns to leaders if they spot any signs of abuse or neglect. Leaders are alert to potential risks caused by forced marriage, female genital mutilation and radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Without exception, teachers and other adults are highly skilled in ensuring every classroom is a calm haven in which all pupils can thrive. Excellent relationships, based on mutual respect and good humour, foster pupils' desire to work hard and succeed.
- Getting something wrong or struggling with new ideas does not hold any fear or difficulties for the teachers at Holy Family. Their strong subject knowledge means they can tackle any muddled thinking quickly and spot gaps in pupils' prior learning. Teachers are willing, and able, to put their plans on hold and go back a few steps to ensure everyone has grasped new learning. This is a particularly strong feature in mathematics teaching, and accounts for pupils' confidence in, and enthusiasm for, the subject.
- Teachers give pupils time to talk about their ideas and they model new learning well so pupils have examples to help them along the way. Teachers check understanding and give clear instructions so pupils know what they need to do.
- All teachers follow the agreed whole-school approaches to teaching reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils benefit from a consistent approach as they move from class to class. The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is especially well organised. It runs like a well-oiled machine because adults are trained fully and understand their role in supporting young readers. Mathematics lessons are lively because resources are used effectively and teachers are very good at promoting pupils' agility in tackling mental mathematical problems.
- Teachers are skilled in ensuring pupils have the basic skills to write. This is bearing fruit as pupils have an appropriate bank of knowledge about spelling, grammar and punctuation. Teachers help scaffold pupils'

understanding of how to develop character descriptions and how to start or end a story. However, this good learning is not always put to effective use when pupils do have the opportunity to write independently. Not all teachers have the skills to promote pupils' ability to write at length, with creativity and flair, so that the content of pupils' writing appeals to different audiences. Teachers sometimes hold onto the reins too tightly, going over old ground, when it is apparent the pupils are ready to get started. This prevents some pupils from thinking for themselves or having an opportunity to learn from their mistakes. It stops the most able from soaring as accomplished writers.

- Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly – helping pupils to see what they need to do to improve further. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning across the board because they are well trained and have a good understanding of their role within and outside the classroom.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils know they are valued and valuable members of the school community.
- Pupils' personal development is a shining example of success because their time at school ensures they are well-rounded youngsters who can work as part of a team, accept the views of their classmates and take feedback about their work on board. Their excellent manners, breathtaking attitudes to learning and their willingness to keep going even when they do not get it right first time is setting them up very well for future success in their adult life. They are keen to make a contribution to the school. They approach additional responsibilities seriously and maturely. Pupils who act as representatives for the school council, chaplaincy or eco-school wear their green, blue and purple sweatshirts with pride.
- Pupils genuinely care about each other and feel part of a large family. Respect, tolerance and empathy touch every aspect of school life. Differences are explored and valued; for example, in Year 2, the individuality of each snowflake is used to help pupils understand 'everyone is different; everyone is unique'. Consequently pupils treat each other well. They feel extremely safe and free from hurtful name-calling. Pupils are adamant bullying is a rarity; their views are backed up by school records which show any form of bullying is an exceptional occurrence. They have upmost confidence in adults who take swift and meaningful action to tackle any cause of unhappiness.
- Pupils are happy to shine in their work or to ask for extra help if they are struggling because they know they do not face the risk of being teased. They have no fear in holding their hands up to explain where they went wrong in solving problems so that others can learn from their mistakes.
- Pupils are gaining a good grounding in how to keep themselves safe. Their understanding of how to minimise online threats and the risk of grooming when using the internet, playing electronic games or using mobile phones is particularly strong.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are truly delightful. The pride that leaders, teachers and governors have in the pupils of Holy Family is not misplaced.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. This is true of the very youngest children who follow instructions and happily work with others, to the oldest pupils, who carry the mantle of being a role model with due gravitas.
- Learning is rarely disrupted by poor or inattentive behaviour. School records confirm pupils were not acting out of character during the inspection. Their excellent attitudes and respectful behaviour is a feature of school life day after day. The key to pupils' remarkable attitudes and conduct is twofold: respect and tolerance underpins everything that happens in school and adults equip pupils with the skills to manage their own behaviour. As a result, school is calm and friendly at all times and adults rarely need to intervene to remind pupils how to behave.
- Pupils are exceedingly proud of their school. They are keen to show off all that they hold dear. They have no complaints about the way they are treated or their learning. Their courteous behaviour does not falter when they come across visitors, temporary teachers or when they work with teaching assistants. This was very clear during a Year 5 physical education lesson led by an adult other than the class teacher. Despite the unpleasant weather, pupils listened carefully and followed instructions to the letter. Everyone enjoyed the session and all had a chance to build their skills in tag-rugby.
- Pupils say behaviour is typically good. They recognise everyone has an off-day now and then which can

sometimes lead to out of character bad humour or silliness. However, they know adults deal with these rare incidents well, applying the behaviour policy consistently and fairly.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils embrace all that the school has to offer wholeheartedly. They thoroughly enjoy their time at school from the minute they cross the threshold until they leave at the end of the day. They work hard at all times and across different subjects because they are keen to succeed. Their positive outlook and willingness to apply themselves to any task goes a long way in explaining their good progress over time and their readiness for the next stage of their education.
- The decline in standards since the last inspection is due to pupils' lower than average attainment in writing. Pupils fare less well in writing than in reading and mathematics. Children's writing skills lag behind other areas of development when they join Nursery. This means they are on constant catch-up across the school. Assessment information and the work in pupils' books show almost all make better than expected progress in writing over time. However, this is still not rapid enough to ensure more pupils are working at the levels expected for their age.
- Pupils have a secure grasp of basic skills and they understand the mechanics of writing. This accounts for their very strong gains in the grammar, punctuation and spelling tests at the end of Year 6. However, they are not able to bridge the gap between knowing the rules for writing and actually becoming young writers who produce creative, interesting and imaginative work that appeals to a reader. Pupils willingly put pen to paper, but they do not display the same level of enthusiasm for writing that is evident in other lessons. Many admit they find writing difficult. They do not always get the opportunity to apply their writing skills across other subjects.
- Different groups of pupils across the school make good and sometimes better progress in reading. Younger children use their well-developed phonics skills effectively to tackle new words with confidence. Older pupils read texts with ease, understanding and enjoyment. As a result, pupils' gains in the Year 1 phonics check are average, and standards in reading by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are consistently above average. Following a dip in 2014, pupils' achievement in mathematics has improved and mirrors the national picture. Pupils enjoy mathematics because they have a good grasp of number patterns so they can tackle problems without stumbling over simple calculations.
- Disadvantaged pupils fare well in school. Achievement gaps are closing or have disappeared over time. By the end of Year 2, disadvantaged pupils out-do their classmates and they are racing closer to the standards gained by pupils in other schools. This is a similar story in Key Stage 2. Disadvantaged pupils do very well in reading. Their strong progress means their attainment is higher than other pupils in Holy Family and across the country. The number of disadvantaged pupils making better than expected progress in mathematics matches the national average. This group leave school about one term behind their classmates and other pupils of the same age. The discrepancy is in writing. Progress is slower for this group. This means disadvantaged pupils are almost two terms behind in their writing skills and knowledge when they join their secondary school.
- From low starting points into Year 1, pupils make very strong progress across Key Stage 1. As a result, they start Year 3 with broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points because they are very well supported in lessons and during small-group sessions by skilled teaching assistants. The most-able pupils do not lag behind. By the end of Year 6 this group fly in reading; almost two thirds are working beyond the typical level for their age. The picture is not as rosy for writing. Fewer pupils make the leap to achieve the higher levels.
- There are no differences in the achievement of pupils with English as an additional language or those pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. These groups flourish and often do better than their classmates and at least as well as pupils in other schools.
- In the past, it has been the boys, particularly White British boys, who struggle to make the same gains in their learning as others in the school. However, this is no longer the case. Boys are making much greater ground so that achievement gaps are narrowing in almost every class.
- Pupils achieve well across subjects other than English and mathematics. They are gaining the skills and knowledge to investigate and explain scientific phenomena and their musical talents are unleashed through condensed teaching sessions led by external experts. The number of 'Bonjours!' heard throughout the

inspection demonstrates pupils' enthusiasm for learning a modern foreign language. However, pupils' books, the work on display and pupils' own views point to some limitations in the opportunities for pupils to develop a set of skills that will enable them to become creative and competent artists.

Early years provision

is good

- When children join the Nursery, very few are able to hit the ground running and the majority are not able to access the type of activities that they would usually be able to do at their age. Many children have a long distance to travel in their writing and communication skills. School information suggests that children make strong progress from these starting points. Nonetheless, in the recent past not enough children made big enough leaps in their learning to ensure they are ready for Year 1. The teachers in Key Stage 1 have had an uphill battle to ensure these children are ready for the next stage of their education.
- However, the tide has turned. This year, the number of children prepared for a good start in Year 1 increased markedly and matched the national average. Almost one in every five children exceeded the expected good levels of development for their age, which is setting them up well for future success. Although children make swift gains across the early years, their writing skills remain lower than their achievement in other areas of learning. Boys and those children who are eligible for free school meals are making the same progress as their friends, so their outcomes by the end of Reception are beginning to mirror those of their peers.
- This turn-around in fortune is due to good leadership. The early years leader's influence has led to a complete review of the early years environment and teaching techniques to help adults get the most out of children. Inspection evidence confirms the positive changes are here to stay.
- The nurturing environment means children are safe and thoroughly enjoy their time in Nursery and Reception. Children settle quickly, follow routines and instructions without question and display the hallmark of effective learners. They are keen to take part in activities and their concentration does not wane because their curiosity is aroused by the interesting tasks and resources. They work and play together well, listening to their friends, taking turns and happily sharing the equipment. Children's behaviour is a strength throughout the early years. It does not falter. Their excellent attitudes are a good match for older pupils in the school.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Teachers use time well. They are skilled in balancing small-group focused teaching sessions alongside opportunities for children to work with more freedom. Classrooms are well organised and activities are shaped to capture children's interests and help them learn about the world around them. Teachers and teaching assistants work together seamlessly to support children's learning. This is because all adults have benefitted from up-to-date training. The attractive outdoor area, including the woodland environment, is used well to give children opportunities to explore, investigate and learn in a different way. Teachers are keeping a keen eye on children's basic skills; for example, children are helped to develop the necessary finger movements so they can hold and use writing tools. However, opportunities for children to be more creative in their art work and model-making are less well developed.
- Children's learning is assessed carefully, but adults do not always identify the next steps for each individual and ensure there is sufficient challenge in the different areas of learning around the classroom. All welfare requirements are met in full. Positive relationships with parents are fostered through 'stay and play' sessions and opportunities for parents to contribute to children's attractive learning journey.

School details

Unique reference number	105830
Local authority	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10002595

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Denise Frain
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Arnold
Telephone number	01706 640480
Website	www.holyfamilyrc.rochdale.sch.uk
Email address	office@holyfamilyrc.rochdale.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	May 2008

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is broadly average but is increasing over time. There are more pupils who speak English as an additional language than found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is twice the national average. (Pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government for pupils who are known to be eligible for free schools meals or who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards. These are the minimum standards and rate of progress expected in reading, writing and mathematics of pupils in Key Stage 2.
- Since the last inspection, there has been a considerable turnaround of staff. The previous headteacher has retired. A new headteacher took up post in September 2009.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited every classroom on several occasions to observe teaching and learning. The headteacher took part in most of these visits.
- Inspectors observed and spoke to pupils during lessons and at play and lunchtime. They met formally with three groups of pupils and heard pupils read.
- Meetings were held with staff, senior and subject leaders and members of the governing body. A telephone discussion took place with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including arrangements for safeguarding, information about pupils' outcomes and pupils' books.
- Inspectors spoke informally to a small group of parents and carers at the start of the school day. They also took account of the findings from the school's own questionnaire. There were too few responses on Parent View (the online questionnaire) to evaluate during the inspection.

Inspection team

Joanne Olsson, lead inspector

Barbara Harrold

Maureen Hints

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2015

