

Holy Infant and St Anthony RC Primary School

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

Inspection dates	19–20 April 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- As a result of good teaching, pupils achieve well and are well prepared for their next stage of education. In 2015, the progress that pupils made from key stage 1 to key stage 2 was greater than that in most schools nationally.
- Effective teaching and assessment ensure that pupils acquire the skills and knowledge that they need to make good progress in a range of subjects.
- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. In particular, work to develop pupils' understanding of British values is excellent.
- Safeguarding is effective and pupils say that they feel safe.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they show excellent attitudes to learning.
- Children in the early years are happy and settled. They make good progress as a result of interesting learning activities which they enjoy.
- The highly effective headteacher, ably assisted by very committed senior leaders and staff, has improved the quality of teaching and raised standards.
- The governing body holds leaders and staff to account well for the progress that pupils make. Governors know the school very well and provide very effective challenge and support to leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although good, pupils' progress in key stage 1 is not as good as in key stage 2. Disadvantaged pupils do not always make as much progress as their peers and a smaller proportion of the most-able pupils achieve above-average standards in key stage 1 than is typical in most schools.
- In the early years, some small groups of children, including children who speak English as an additional language and the disadvantaged, do not always achieve as well as others.
- Although the number of pupils who are persistently absent is small and decreasing, pupils' overall attendance is below average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - increasing rates of progress in key stage 1, especially for disadvantaged pupils
 - ensuring that all groups of children in the early years, including the disadvantaged and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in all areas of learning, and in writing in particular
 - setting a higher level of challenge for the most-able pupils to ensure that a greater proportion achieve above-average standards in their work, particularly in key stage 1
 - increasing the impact of teachers' marking and guidance to pupils through the consistent implementation of the school's agreed policy in key stage 1.

- Continue with the strategies to reduce persistent absence and increase pupils' overall attendance by working closely with families to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher is highly ambitious for the pupils in this school. She has an accurate view of the school's strengths and knows what needs to be done to improve further. She has motivated staff and brought about an improvement in the quality of teaching. Staff have a high regard for her and are committed to further improvement under her direction.
- Leaders at all levels understand the headteacher's vision and give her excellent support. Senior leaders, who are also class teachers, provide excellent examples of highly effective teaching to other staff.
- Systems to hold staff to account are rigorous and effective. Clear targets are set for teachers. Regular checks are made to ensure that teachers are meeting these targets and that pupils are making good progress across a range of subjects.
- Staff are well trained and the 2014 national curriculum has been implemented well. For example, the mathematics curriculum gives pupils very good opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils develop a love of singing and were observed thoroughly enjoying opportunities to sing together as a school.
- The curriculum is enriched by a range of educational visits and extra-curricular activities. Pupils say that they really enjoy taking part in team activities and in sporting competitions with other schools. Visitors to school also make a good contribution to the curriculum. Recently a local Member of Parliament visited the school and pupils relished the opportunity to question him about issues that are important to them and to their community.
- The school's work to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain is excellent. Pupils have a clear understanding of British values and can talk in detail about how these are very much a part of their school's ethos and work.
- The physical education and sport premium funding has been used wisely. Consequently, pupils have a good understanding of the elements of a healthy lifestyle and show good attitudes to sport and keeping fit. Pupils have good opportunities to take part in sport during and after the school day.
- Leaders have carefully evaluated the impact of the spending of the pupil premium funding on the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils. They have evaluated where the spending has been successful and know where improvements need to be made, such as in the early years and in key stage 1.
- School leaders have worked with staff to review and improve the school's marking policy. This is consistently implemented in key stage 2, but in key stage 1 not all staff are following the agreed policy.
- Increasing pupils' attendance is a key priority for the school. In 2015, the attendance rate was slightly below average. Strategies to reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent have been very successful.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is very effective. The governing body has an accurate and clear understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be done next to improve. Governors regularly evaluate ways to improve the impact of their governance. One example of this has been to review and improve the procedures for the headteacher's performance management.
 - Governors receive good information from the headteacher about the checks she and other leaders make to hold teachers to account. As a result, governors are under no illusions about what needs to be done to ensure that the school continues to improve. For example, from their evaluation of assessment information, they are aware that the school needs to increase the progress of various groups of pupils, such as most-able pupils and the disadvantaged, in key stage 1 in particular.
 - Governors are rightly proud that they have recruited a highly effective, substantive headteacher after four changes in leadership in as many years.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Appropriate policies are in place and staff training is regularly updated. All appropriate checks are made when recruiting new staff, and visitors to the school are carefully vetted. The school works closely with parents and other agencies to ensure that pupils feel safe and are safeguarded well. Governors take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously and have recently spent a day in school checking that all policies, procedures and records meet statutory requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching is good and improving and, as a result, pupils make good progress. In mathematics in particular, teaching is structured so that the aims of the mathematics national curriculum are met. Pupils are able to explain their thinking and use reasoning to work out successful strategies to solve problems. Year 6 pupils, in particular, show perseverance and resilience when solving challenging problems.
- Training for staff has been effective in improving the quality of teaching in writing. Using a variety of strategies, teachers ensure that pupils know which features they need to include in their writing to make good progress. Teachers seek to inspire pupils to help them to write effectively. This includes pupils using their previous study of a poem to inspire them and to give them ideas to create suspense in their own writing.
- The teaching of reading and phonics (the sounds that letters make) is very effective. In the early years and key stage 1, pupils learn to read, write and spell through applying their phonics skills. For example, pupils were observed learning how to spell a range of words beginning with the silent letter 'k' quickly.
- Teaching is good across the curriculum and this is evident in pupils' progress seen in their topic books. They study a variety of topics and their work in science shows that they have good opportunities to explore scientific ideas and concepts. British values are taught in detail and pupils have a good understanding of what the values mean. In one session seen by an inspector, pupils learned about democracy and investigated how they would negotiate and agree how a budget may be shared out by leaders in government. They reflected on the different needs of departments, such as education, health and transport, and discussed how their spending would need to reflect the values and promises of their imaginary political party.
- Teachers use assessment information well to plan lessons which develop the skills and knowledge that pupils need to make good progress. The most-able pupils, particularly in key stage 2, have work set at a high level of challenge to help them to make good progress. The level of challenge for most-able pupils in key stage 1 is increasing. For example, in one mathematics session observed by an inspector, the most-able pupils in Year 2 were given a range of problems to solve where they had to select the correct mathematical operation and choose the best strategy or equipment to help them work out the answer. Pupils had to think very carefully to make the correct choices to ensure they were successful.
- Assessment information is also used well to identify groups of pupils who need to undertake more work in a particular subject. These groups are flexible and may consist of most-able pupils who need further challenge or pupils who have special educational needs or disability who need more support or consolidation. This group work is carried out by teachers and teaching assistants.
- The school has reviewed and agreed the policy for the marking of pupils' work with an emphasis on supporting pupils in developing the skills to learn from their own mistakes. This policy is fully embedded in key stage 2 and pupils are confident learners with clear direction about how to improve their own work. This is not consistent in key stage 1.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils show a high degree of confidence in themselves as successful learners and know what they have to do to make good progress. Key stage 2 pupils, in particular, make the most of excellent opportunities to evaluate their own learning.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of British values and uphold these in their daily life in school. For example, they understand what constitutes mutual respect and tolerance. Pupils have a strong sense of fairness and equality and a typical quotation from one pupil was, 'This school will not tolerate treating some people differently.'
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They show a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of circumstances including when using the internet. When speaking to inspectors, pupils pointed out that they should only use age-appropriate websites and games on the internet and never give any personal details.
- Pupils understand the different types of bullying and say that it is very rare in school. They have great confidence in adults to resolve problems. They say that derogatory language is also very rare.

- Pupils take their responsibilities very seriously. School council members represent the views of their classmates well and 'playground pals' support other pupils and play with them at break and lunchtime.
- Pupils enjoy a variety of physical activities at break and lunchtime as well as opportunities to relax and socialise in the quiet areas provided. They know about the importance of making healthy food choices at lunchtime and can explain the elements of a healthy lifestyle.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are respectful and polite. They say that this is a welcoming school where staff are kind. In lessons and around school, pupils behave well and respond quickly to instructions from adults.
- Pupils show excellent attitudes to learning and lessons are not disrupted by misbehaviour. Pupils are keen to learn and often work cooperatively or check their answers with a partner to ensure they are successful. The school environment is tidy and orderly and pupils look after it well. They take a pride in their work and this is clear to see in their books.
- Despite leaders' work to improve attendance, pupils' overall attendance at school is below average. However, the school's work to reduce persistent absence has been successful and just a few pupils are now persistently absent. The school's breakfast club is successful in improving pupils' punctuality.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- From starting points which are below those typical for most children in the early years, especially in communication and language, pupils make good progress across all areas of learning. They are well prepared for their next stage of education. Although pupils' progress is good across all key stages, it is greater in key stage 2 than in key stage 1. In 2015, the progress that pupils made from key stage 1 to key stage 2 was greater than that in most schools nationally.
- Standards have risen in key stage 2 since the last inspection and were above average in 2015. In particular, the most-able pupils made excellent progress and attained high standards. Compared with pupils nationally, a greater percentage of the most-able pupils achieved above-average standards in reading, mathematics and writing.
- The percentage of pupils who achieve the required standard in the Year 1 phonics test has been above average for the last three years and demonstrates pupils' good progress in this subject.
- In 2015, pupils in Year 2 achieved broadly average standards in their end of key stage 1 assessments. The proportion of most-able pupils who achieved above-average standards was smaller than in most schools nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. However, this academic year, this group is making better progress and a greater proportion than last year are working at above-average standards.
- By the end of key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils make very good progress and, last year, attained higher standards than other pupils in school and nationally. However, this is not the case in key stage 1 and the early years where the attainment of this group is not as high as for other pupils. Current performance information shows that the gap is narrowing, but there is still more to be done.
- The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve just as well as, or better than, other pupils in the school at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. However, in the early years, this group do not achieve as well as other children.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability and those who need to catch up receive well-planned and effective support which meets their needs. As a result, they make good progress from their starting points across all key stages.

Early years provision

is good

- The effectiveness of leadership and management in early years is good and children make good progress as a result. In 2015, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development (the skills and knowledge that children need to be ready to start key stage 1) was broadly average. From their below-average starting points, this demonstrates that they made good progress.
- Good teaching and learning ensure that children develop well. Children have a good range of activities which they enjoy both indoors and outside. Although space is limited outside, it is used extremely well to

promote learning. During the inspection, children were learning about insects and showed great interest in an area where they could hunt for 'bugs' using magnifying glasses. One girl was very keen to tell an inspector all about the stages in the life-cycle of a butterfly.

- Detailed records are kept of children's learning and achievements. These are used well to plan what children need to learn next to make good progress.
- Parents play an important role in supporting their child's learning and they are encouraged to fill in sheets with 'wow' moments which record their child's achievements at home. These are inserted into their school records. In addition, parents are welcomed into school to take part in activities in 'stay and play' sessions with their children.
- Children are safe and well cared for by all adults. They behave well and are encouraged to play cooperatively and make good choices. An example of this was seen during the inspection when some children realised that the sandpit was too crowded and the adult asked if one would volunteer to move to another activity. After some thought, one child decided to leave the sand and was thanked for making a sensible choice.
- Additional funding to narrow gaps for disadvantaged children has been used wisely to increase the progress of these children. In 2015, there was a wide gap in attainment with a much smaller proportion of disadvantaged children achieving the good level of development compared with other children. Although this gap is narrowing, there is still more to do.
- Adults in the early years work hard to support different groups of children and strategies to support boys' reading and writing are effective. Consequently, boys are achieving well in these subjects which is an improvement on previous years. However, overall attainment in writing for all children is not as high as in other subjects. Children who are at an early stage of learning to speak English have additional support but more needs to be done to help them develop their language skills more rapidly.

School details

Unique reference number	105219
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10002280

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marguerita Leyden
Headteacher	Helen McGrath
Telephone number	01204 333111
Website	www.holy-infants.bolton.sch.uk
Email address	office@holy-infants.bolton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 November 2013

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for looked after children) is above average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and just under one in ten of all pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school met the government's 2015 floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school provides a breakfast club every morning.
- Both prior to and since the last inspection, there have been several changes in leadership. The last substantive headteacher left in 2012. There was an executive headteacher in post at the last inspection and the current, substantive headteacher took up her post in September 2014. In addition, there has been considerable staff absence this academic year. Currently, there are temporary teachers in Reception and Year 1 and, until February 2016, there had been a number of temporary teachers in Year 2.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors gathered a range of evidence from the school's documentation, assessment information relating to pupils' progress and attainment, work in pupils' books and observing in lessons. Documents examined included safeguarding records, improvement plans, school policies and external reports from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across a range of lessons and subjects and two of these observations were made jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the lead inspector observed the headteacher giving feedback to staff.
- Two groups of pupils met with inspectors who also talked to pupils informally at break and lunchtime while observing their activities.
- The teaching of phonics and reading was observed and one inspector heard some key stage 1 pupils read.
- Meetings were held with a representative from the local authority and with the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. Meetings were also held with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and subject leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the 16 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and one inspector talked to a group of five parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors also took account of the 16 questionnaires completed by school staff.

Inspection team

Andrée Coleman, lead inspector
Doreen Davenport

Ofsted Inspector
Ofsted Inspector

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Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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