

# Bolton St Catherine's Academy

Stitch-Mi-Lane, Harwood, Bolton, BL2 4HU

<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 May 2016
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of leadership requires improvement because senior leaders have not addressed all aspects of school improvement with sufficient urgency.
- In 2015, the proportion of pupils achieving five GCSE qualifications including English and mathematics at grades A\* to C was significantly below the national figure.
- Pupil premium funding has not been used effectively. Disadvantaged pupils in the senior school underachieve in English and mathematics.
- Teachers do not consistently take into account the needs and abilities of their pupils when they plan work for them.
- The level of challenge, including through teachers' questioning, is insufficient in some classes at key stages 3 and 4. Consequently, pupils lose concentration and do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Some pupils in the secondary phase do not take enough care in presenting their work.
- Teachers' feedback is not consistently effective in helping pupils to improve their work.
- Attendance is below the national average in the secondary phase and for some learners in the sixth form.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils in the early years to learn outside.

### The school has the following strengths

- The early years, primary school, sixth form and special needs provision are well led.
- Pupils achieve well in the early years and primary school.
- Rates of progress made by pupils in English and mathematics are improving.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities make good progress.

## Full report

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

- Improve the effectiveness of senior leaders in raising standards in the secondary phase by ensuring that:
  - all aspects of the school's development have precise action plans, timescales and milestones so that senior leaders and governors can check how successful it is at key points during the year
  - pupil premium funding is used effectively to narrow attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.
  
- Improve the outcomes for pupils in the secondary phase by:
  - making sure that there is sufficient rigour in addressing the decline in standards in 2015, including the widening gap in English and mathematics for disadvantaged pupils.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the secondary phase so that it reaches the best by ensuring that:
  - all teachers use information about pupils' prior attainment and background to plan lessons which stretch them
  - teachers provide appropriate challenge for all pupils through the use of questioning
  - that feedback is as effective as the best in showing pupils how to improve their work
  - high expectations about presentation and handwriting for all pupils.
  
- Work to improve attendance of some pupils in the secondary phase and some in the sixth form so that it rises to national expectations.
  
- Improve the use of the outdoor area in the early years.

An external review of the academy's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders' actions to secure good outcomes for all pupils have been variable in their effectiveness. Improvement in achievement for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils' progress in the secondary phase in English and mathematics, has not been fast enough. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in 2014 and 2015 indicate that leaders have not been using the pupil premium funding effectively. The progress of these pupils has not been a sufficiently high priority.
- While senior leaders are now taking action to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the secondary phase, they have not taken a sufficiently sharp view of their overall work to ensure that it is coherent in ensuring that all aspects for the school's improvement match the school's self-evaluation.
- Leaders have drawn on expertise from other schools to improve standards in English and mathematics. However, they have not produced a clear plan linked to outcomes for this aspect of school improvement.
- Leadership of the primary phase is strong. Leaders' high expectations in the primary phase have resulted in good progress for all pupils. However, the reasons for the good progress made by pupils in the primary phase have not been used by senior leaders to identify how strong practice can be developed and applied in the secondary phase.
- Middle leaders are clear about how well their departments are doing and what they need to improve. Some have developed productive links with the primary phase and deliver lessons to primary pupils. However, while there have been discussions between the head of mathematics in the secondary phase and the numeracy lead in the primary phase, there has not been sufficient account taken of the good progress made in the latter and how this could be built on more consistently when pupils move to Year 7.
- School leaders do not yet evaluate well enough the use of either the pupil premium, the extra funding provided by the government for disadvantaged pupils, or Year 7 catch-up funding for pupils who enter the school with low levels of literacy and numeracy. Leaders do not have sufficient insight into what impact these funds are having on the progress pupils make. However, following the recent appointment of a manager to take responsibility for disadvantaged pupils, the monitoring and support for these pupils are becoming more sharply focused. Staff are due to receive training on how to teach disadvantaged pupils effectively.
- Reading programmes are in place across the primary and secondary phases and are now used intensively to accelerate progress.
- Senior leaders' evaluation of the quality of teaching in the secondary phase has become more accurate and, as a result, they know where support is needed. They are aware of the subjects which need to generate higher outcomes, and there is now closer support and challenge where there is underperformance. Leaders deliver training for staff which closely matches where improvements are needed. Teachers are now encouraged to share their practice at weekly updates and good practice is now being shared across the school.
- Leaders consider samples of pupils' work to see if feedback is effective in securing learning gains and whether the school's policy on 'read and response' is being used by all departments. The discussions about what is working well are having an impact on improving standards for pupils currently in the school.
- Teachers have information provided by the school about pupils who have special educational needs or disability and many make good use of this to adapt their teaching to make sure these pupils make progress. Some teachers do not take sufficient account of the needs of disadvantaged pupils, because they have not had enough training on how to do this to gain more impact. A leader has recently been appointed to take charge of this aspect of the school's work.
- Pupils are now given clear information about their effort and achievement in subjects, which they appreciate.
- The curriculum is well balanced and the school offers a wide range of vocational and academic qualifications. Pupils have opportunities to learn about people with different faiths, beliefs and backgrounds across a range of subjects. The school's values are underpinned by democracy and respect and pupils welcome opportunities to contribute to 'Student Voice', the body which works on aspects of school life. While there is a good range of dramatic and sporting activities outside school, leaders do not analyse participation rates.
- The primary sports funding is used well in the primary phase.

- Leaders guide pupils well in their choice of subjects and more pupils are continuing to study academic qualifications at college and in the sixth form as a result. Advice and guidance are extensive and involve external partners, business and further education. Pupils said that they appreciated the range of experiences and support they receive.
- A small number of pupils attend provision away from school. Leaders rigorously monitor their work and, as a result, pupils achieve and behave well.
- The systems to reward teachers' performance are now robust. The majority of staff are clear that the current system is fair and helps them improve with appropriate training. There is effective support for staff who are new to the profession and new systems for reviewing subjects are beginning to have an impact.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The governors are very supportive of the school. However, they have not had enough information about how the pupil premium funding is being spent, or the difference it is making.
  - The governors have ensured that pay and rewards are now closely linked to outcomes for pupils.
  - The minutes of the governing body show that while governors have asked questions about the decline in results, these have mostly been answered with external reasons such as the change in grade boundaries. However, the quality of assessment and feedback was identified as a priority for improvement and governors now have information about its impact. This aspect of the school's work was supported by an external adviser and this is improving pupils' current progress.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's work to keep pupils safe is systematic and this aspect of the school is very well led. Staff are trained in the identification and reporting of risk. The most vulnerable pupils receive close support and the school's liaison with other agencies is effective. Staff are trained to identify when a pupil may be at risk of neglect, abuse or exploitation and they report their concerns.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** requires improvement

- There has been too much variability in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment that pupils experience in their time at the school and, as a consequence, it requires improvement.
- There is still some teaching which does not result in secondary pupils making enough progress. This happens when prior information about what pupils are capable of learning is not used to give them work which stretches them enough. When this is the case, pupils lose focus and do not make enough progress.
- A significant number of staff left the school at the end of the last academic year. New appointments have been made and the quality of teaching is improving. The work to ensure greater consistency in teaching, learning and assessment is beginning to result in improvements. Training for staff on effective feedback has built their confidence. This in turn is now making a difference to the progress pupils make. However, the school has recognised that the use of questioning needs further development. While good examples of questioning to probe pupils' understanding and to make them think harder was evident in a number of lessons, this is not yet used consistently by all members of staff.
- The system of 'read and response' has been developed across the whole school, including the primary phase and, in most subjects, this has made a difference to the way teachers and pupils reflect on and improve their work. In those few areas where this has not been fully adopted, pupils are not making the same gains in their learning.
- The most effective teaching in the school is well planned and builds on what pupils already know. Where this is the case, teachers use their subject knowledge and expertise to involve and enthuse pupils. Inspectors observed pupils benefiting from high-quality teaching in music, drama and humanities.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in English seen during the inspection was good. This was because of teachers' strong subject knowledge and high expectations that all pupils should make a contribution. However, some common mistakes in pupils' work go uncorrected and are therefore repeated.
- The teaching in mathematics for pupils currently in the secondary school is improving. This is due to better teaching, including good-quality teaching to probe pupils' understanding. The mathematics leader recognises that more needs to be done to secure effective questioning across the department.
- Teaching in the primary phase is of consistently good quality. Teaching in literacy and numeracy is planned well to make sure that pupils are appropriately challenged and have a good range of stimulating

activities that drive learning at a fast pace. Relationships between teachers and pupils are consistently strong. Pupils work hard and with keen interest.

- The advice provided by leaders to support pupils with additional needs in all phases of the school, including the early years and the sixth form, is comprehensive and helpful. Where this is used consistently, pupils make gains in their learning. Teaching for pupils in the inclusion unit is very strong. These pupils are provided with work which makes them think and are challenged to work hard.
- Teachers in all phases have detailed 'class data files' to keep accurate records of pupils' prior learning and any particular needs. In key stage 3, this is beginning to have an impact on such pupils' outcomes. They are starting to catch up with their classmates.
- Literacy across the curriculum is well developed in the primary phase and has improved in the secondary phase since the last inspection. There is now a focus on knowing and understanding key technical vocabulary. The library is well used both for lessons and at breaktimes.
- Teachers are now involved in developing their practice in a variety of ways. This includes weekly teaching and learning briefings and bespoke training sessions.
- Links and communication with parents are improving. Parents of primary pupils said that they valued having regular texts about how their children were getting on and which clubs were on offer.
- Teaching assistants work well with pupils who have additional needs. The support they provide is focused, appropriate and helps pupils to make progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare in all phases of the school is good.
- Systems for reporting bullying and dealing with it have been strengthened since the last inspection and pupils say that any bullying is dealt with promptly. However, some pupils say there are still occasions when pupils do not report teasing as they worry that things might get worse. However, the school's own surveys of pupils' views and parents show that the majority of pupils feels safe in the school.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in school, in relationships and online. Pupils know about the dangers of extremism.
- Pupils attending off-site provision improve their basic skills, behaviour and confidence. The school monitors their attendance, behaviour and progress very closely. Leaders take swift action to support any who are in danger of falling behind and, as a result, outcomes for these pupils are good.
- A programme of careers education is taught from Years 7 to 11. Pupils in Year 11 have support and guidance to decide on their next stage of education or training. There are good systems to support vulnerable pupils in the next stage of their education or training, and parents spoke very highly of this.
- School leaders have strong systems in place to support pupils' welfare and safety. There are good links to outside agencies and these support the school's work in teaching pupils about emotional and mental health issues.
- Leaders make sure that pupils have opportunities to understand British values. This was evident in assemblies, and in talking to pupils about their opportunities to contribute to school life. For instance, pupils take part in departmental reviews and organise a 'buddying' system for pupils new to the school.
- Leaders' work to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism is effective. Leaders respond swiftly when pupils are vulnerable to these issues.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Although the majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, a small number do not work hard enough. The revised behaviour code has raised expectations about the standard of pupils' behaviour, and there is much less tolerance of any form of disruption. Behaviour is better than when the school was last inspected, and leaders have taken action to ensure that there is no smoking on site.
- The school's heads of year responsible for attendance and welfare have considerable expertise and, as a result of their work, pupils' attendance has improved since the last inspection. The current level of attendance is just below the national average for secondary schools. The attendance of pupils who have special educational needs, which was previously low, has improved and is now above the national level for this group.

- Pupils enjoy eating together at lunchtimes and interact with pupils from the local special school. Pupils look after the school well and respect the environment. The canteen is a central part of the school, both in its location and as a place to socialise. Pupils use this area well and know that it is unacceptable to drop litter.

## Outcomes for pupils

## require improvement

- While the pupils who transfer from the primary phase arrive with above national levels of attainment, more than 100 pupils start the secondary phase in Year 7 with levels of attainment that are much lower than national figures. The proportion of pupils who achieved five A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics, was significantly below other pupils nationally.
- From low starting points, disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 did not make as much progress as their classmates, and the attainment gap between these pupils and others widened in 2015. Disadvantaged pupils in key stage 3 are doing better than previously and their progress is accelerating. This is due to the structured support they are now receiving.
- The proportion of most-able pupils is well below the national figure and they have not always achieved the higher grades. Teaching is now stronger for these pupils and they are on track to reach their targets. The progress of the most-able pupils in mathematics improved in 2015 and information about the performance of pupils currently in the school shows that standards are rising.
- The support for pupils who have special educational needs or disability is very effective. As a consequence, they are making good progress. In particular, the development of pupils' key literacy skills, including reading, is good.
- Pupils in the primary phase start school at a developmental stage significantly below that expected for their age. Attainment in key stage 1 is below the national average, as is the proportion of children who reach a good level of development by the end of Reception. Standards achieved in the Year 1 phonics screening check are above the national expectations. During their time in the primary phase, pupils make very good progress and by the end of Year 6 achieve the same as other pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils make the same progress as their peers in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils in the secondary phase perform well in information technology, applied engineering, French, performing arts and core science.
- The achievement of pupils currently in the school indicates that the actions taken by senior leaders to improve pupils' outcomes are having a positive impact. Current progress information for all pupils indicates that outcomes for pupils across most subjects are showing improvement. The scrutiny of pupils' work across a range of subjects confirms that pupils are making better progress than previously in key stages 3 and 4.
- The small number of pupils who are currently attending off-site vocational courses have the opportunity to take mathematics and English GCSE examinations. They are on track to achieve their vocational qualifications, which will give them the opportunity to progress to further training.
- Pupils talk enthusiastically about their enjoyment of reading. They visit the school library regularly in English lessons and read both at school, and for pleasure at home, in increasing numbers.
- Rising standards in English and mathematics, combined with impartial careers guidance, mean that pupils are better prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.

## Early years provision

## is good

- Children enter Reception classes with skills, knowledge and understanding that are typically well below what is expected for children of their age. In 2015, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development was below the national average. The school's current assessment information indicates that all children are making good progress and are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- The Reception classroom is a bright and enticing environment where there is a real focus on developing children's communication. Teachers plan activities that provide for children's early interests and build on their prior learning. Work in books is neatly presented and shows that the children are making good progress. Teaching assistants are well informed about their role for working with designated individuals or small groups of children.
- The classroom atmosphere is conducive to learning. Children enjoyed listening to the story of 'Little Red

Riding Hood', talking about it and making a cake for grandma's birthday and a trap for the wolf using construction materials. Support for children who speak English as an additional language is exceptionally well focused.

- All staff in the early years provision have very high expectations that all children can succeed, regardless of their circumstances. The early years leader is a highly skilled and knowledgeable professional who leads her team well. She assesses children accurately and ensures that all her staff use this information to plan precise learning to meet the needs of children of all abilities.
- Staff work closely together, adjusting the learning well for children who have special educational needs or disability to ensure that they make good progress. Pupil premium funding is used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged children catch up quickly, and the most-able children are given work that makes them think deeply. For example, inspectors noted that she and her staff model, and continually use, language that encourages children to think, make links between ideas and to persist where they find things difficult.
- The provision in the early years is not yet outstanding because, although children make strong levels of progress from very low starting points, the proportion reaching good levels of development is below the national average. However, the children who attend the school's Nursery before entering Reception reach a good level of development, while those who join the school at the start of Reception are less likely to do so. The proportion of all children reaching a good level of development is on track to increase this year. There is a difference between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers, but this is narrowing. Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make progress in line with their peers.
- While the curriculum is dynamic, interesting and meets the needs of children, leaders have recognised that the outdoor area is not yet used as effectively as it might be.
- Leaders have worked hard to improve communication between parents and staff. They have used creative ways, such as 'stay and play', phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) workshops for parents and a bookworm club where parents help to choose a book that can be shared at home. While this is having an impact on learning, leaders know that they need to reach more parents.
- Relationships between adults and children, and between children themselves, are warm. Children feel safe, developing ideas and exploring new things together. Safeguarding is effective and all adults know the children well. All procedures to protect the children from harm are robust. Risk assessments have been carefully considered and equipment is used sensibly.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

## are good

- The newly appointed leader of the sixth form has high expectations for standards and behaviour for learners. Clear improvements have been made since the last inspection. Attendance has improved and the advice and guidance is now more focused for learners so that they are guided to study programmes that are relevant to their needs.
- The standards achieved in 2015 were stronger for A level than for AS level. This was due in part to learners in the past not having the appropriate guidance for courses which met their needs and aspirations. Learners following vocational courses achieved well. The attainment of disadvantaged learners is closer to that of their peers in vocational than in academic subjects. The school works in collaboration with Thornleigh Salesian College and they share provision for science and theatre for learners across the schools.
- Teaching is good in the sixth form. Staff use assessment information, examination requirements and knowledge of their learners to create activities which make them work hard. Teachers have a good level of subject knowledge, often plan lessons well and give helpful feedback to learners. In a sports science lesson, the teacher used questions skilfully to deepen learners' knowledge and understanding of psychological training programmes.
- The leader of the sixth form is effective because she and colleagues monitor the quality of teaching closely, and now have a well-developed understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in provision. Along with tutors, they monitor the progress being made by learners closely, acting quickly to provide help when they fall behind.
- Learners who have not achieved a grade C in GCSE English or mathematics are provided with good opportunities to study these subjects further and retake examinations.
- Learners behave well in the sixth form. Their attendance has improved since the last inspection and they are punctual to lessons. They are positive about learning and many are prepared to try hard and do their best.

- The provision for personal development and welfare is strong in the sixth form. Learners have good opportunities to talk to qualified staff about careers, higher education and employment options. Learners spoke highly of the opportunities for work experience. They take part in charitable activities, school drama productions, and work as reading coaches in the primary phase.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135981
<b>Local authority</b>	Bolton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10012136

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

<b>Type of school</b>	All-through
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,160
<b>Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	120
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Graham Burrows
<b>Executive Principal</b>	Lee Harris
<b>Telephone number</b>	01204 332533
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<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5–6 March 2014

## Information about this school

- The school is a larger than average-sized school.
- The majority of pupils are White British and English is their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average. The proportion with an education, health and care plan is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is significantly higher than the national average. This additional funding is given to schools for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The primary school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The secondary school does not meet the government's current floor standards.
- The school has received additional support from Thornleigh Salesian College, Canon Slade School and St James's Church of England High School.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at Ed Start.
- The school meets the requirements for the publication of information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 35 lessons, a number of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. Inspectors also made short visits to lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- Five groups of pupils and learners met with inspectors. Discussions were held with academy staff, including senior leaders, heads of departments and teachers. Discussions were also held with parents and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of school documents including information on pupils' outcomes, the school's monitoring of its work, minutes of meetings, and records relating to the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, behaviour, and the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 16 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and of the eight questionnaires completed by staff and 14 additional comments from parents.

## Inspection team

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Liz Kelly	Ofsted Inspector
Pritiben Patel	Ofsted Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector

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