

Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School

Poulsom Drive, Bootle, Merseyside L30 2NR

Inspection dates

15–16 November 2016

| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
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| 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 | Requires improvement |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders do not set high enough expectations for pupils, particularly those pupils who are most-able pupils or most-able disadvantaged. Too few pupils in these groups make good or better progress.
- Teaching, learning and assessment across the school are variable and the challenges set for pupils do not stretch their thinking, particularly in mathematics.
- When they are not challenged by their work, pupils become disengaged and consequently behaviour is not good.
- Governors do not check to make sure that they are meeting their statutory duties.
- The governing body does not hold the headteacher fully to account for pupils' rates of progress and attainment. The rate of school improvement is not rapid enough.
- Leaders are not effectively preventing or tackling the use of derogatory language by a small minority of pupils.
- Pupils are not provided with texts that challenge them during group reading sessions; this limits their progress in reading.
- Leaders do not effectively evaluate the impact of their actions to improve the school in order to raise standards and inform future priorities. Their feedback to teachers on how to improve their work is not always specific enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils benefit from a range of experiences to enhance their personal development and well-being.
- Attainment at the end of the Reception Year and phonics results in Year 1 have improved over the last three years.
- There are very positive relationships in school between pupils and staff.
- Teaching assistants have received training to effectively support pupils' learning, especially in phonics. Teaching assistants who support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are effective, particularly in the early years.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have transformed the school environment, including the outdoor provision for the early years, and are setting good conditions for learning.
- The effectiveness of middle leadership has improved since the last inspection.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - ensuring that leaders set high expectations for pupils by comparing school performance against national standards
 - accurately evaluating the attainment and progress of groups of pupils to effectively target school development priorities
 - evaluating performance information to identify strategies to improve the rate of progress for pupils in English and mathematics in key stage 2
 - ensuring that high expectations of pupils' performance are communicated to staff to make sure that the level of challenge in lessons at least matches pupils' abilities.
- Improve the effectiveness of governance by:
 - holding the headteacher to account for the rate of improvement within the school.
 - asking more probing questions about the achievement of groups of pupils
 - analysing assessment information to identify priorities to improve teaching and learning within the school
 - checking to make sure that governors are fulfilling their statutory duties.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - providing more specific feedback to staff about how they can improve their teaching
 - evaluating the impact of staff development through regular checks on pupils' progress
 - setting higher expectations of pupils' achievement in mathematics and providing more challenging texts for pupils to read
 - ensuring that pupils' work is challenging, particularly for the most able and most-able disadvantaged pupils
 - being more analytical in monitoring the quality of pupils' work, ensuring that the work set is appropriate to the year-group expectations and the needs of pupils.
- Improve behaviour by:
 - preventing and tackling the use of derogatory language, including homophobic language, to ensure that pupils have respect for others' sexual orientation and gender identity
 - ensuring that all children are engaged in their learning.

An external review of governance 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

- Since the last inspection, progress has stalled due to significant staffing changes. The headteacher has spent much of his time tackling these issues. His attention has been diverted from successfully tackling all the school's weaknesses identified at the last inspection.
- Leaders do not have an accurate view of school performance. Comparatively low performance over the last two years has not been analysed and challenged quickly enough by leaders and governors because they do not compare pupils' achievement with that of pupils nationally. Leaders do not, therefore, effectively communicate their ambition for pupils to teachers. The management of staff performance is not rigorous enough. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning across the school varies.
- Leaders' analysis of pupil premium expenditure does not focus clearly enough on outcomes. The most able disadvantaged pupils are not challenged sufficiently. Pupils told inspectors that they find their work easy. Some uses of the funding are effective, such as the military school which builds pupils' self-confidence and team-working skills and a free breakfast club which provides welcome support for pupils and parents. The pastoral lead has tackled the persistent absence of some targeted pupils and has enabled their families to access early help.
- Leaders use the sports premium to provide a sports coach, a specialist gymnastics coach and extra-curricular clubs in dance, basketball and hockey. While leaders identify that this funding leads to pupils' development of qualities such as perseverance and self-confidence, the targets within the school improvement plan are not well defined so the impact of this expenditure is not always known.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Curriculum teams are beginning to inject creativity into the curriculum and middle leaders are committed to continuing this development.
- There is a wide range of opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Opportunities such as workshops on Hinduism and 'show racism the red card' help prepare pupils for life in modern Britain, while the school council has focused on developing a behaviour code of conduct. Pupils are also active in fundraising for charities.
- Leaders actively promote British values through the school council, whose members visited the local council chambers to learn about democracy. A pupil safety committee meets with governors to improve the school site. Assemblies and displays also reinforce the key values. Not enough action has been taken, however, to address pupils' occasional use of derogatory language.
- Visiting authors, charity events and residential trips supplement the curriculum as well as a wide range of sporting clubs, gardening, singing and arts and crafts clubs which all run for pupils after school.
- Leaders promote equality by arranging visitors to promote disability awareness and understanding of others' faiths. Pupils show a good understanding of the issues of

equality and feel that the school is very accepting of differences between themselves.

- School leaders have made extensive changes to the school site, including new outdoor play facilities, better security measures and a bright and welcoming interior that provides a calm environment for pupils' learning. Pupils are happy to come to school due to the very good relationships they have with staff.
- The building of a new library and resourcing of new and exciting texts for reading is starting to improve pupils' attitudes towards reading for enjoyment.
- Leaders introduced a new assessment system which has enabled them to identify and provide help where it is most needed. There has been an increase in pupils' progress from previous years that demonstrates capacity for the school to improve.
- Staff are positive about opportunities to extend their professional development. However, there is no professional development strategy and no link to school development priorities. The feedback teachers receive to help them improve their practice is sometimes not specific enough. Professional development in the early years has, however, had a good impact on the support provided for pupils in the resourced provision.
- The local authority has provided effective support regarding staffing issues. The local authority adviser is knowledgeable about the school and a range of staff development opportunities has assisted in the rising trend of achievement in phonics. The school has also received external support from a national leader of education for support in dealing with staffing issues and the diocese has assisted governors in the appointment of staff.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not held the headteacher to account for the declining rates of progress since the last inspection. Information provided to governors does not compare the school's performance with national performance. Governors provide challenge about organisational and staffing matters more sharply than they do about the quality of education that pupils receive. Governors are aware of the deployment of staff and the reasons for it but do not fully evaluate the effectiveness of some of their actions, for example in the targeting of the pupil premium expenditure to raise standards, particularly for the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors are passionate about the school and the pupils in it. They have been effective in creating a bright and safe environment for pupils and they prioritise safeguarding. As one governor stated, the school provides an 'oasis' for pupils. Governors have received training on safeguarding matters.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils feel safe in school and they mention new site security measures as the reason for this. They know who to go to if they have any concerns and feel comfortable to approach staff.
- The four designated safeguarding leaders receive annual training on their

responsibilities. Staff who are new to the school comment positively on the training provided as part of their induction. All other staff have had updated training and this is supplemented by regular briefings and safeguarding updates. There is a culture of vigilance in school. Staff are knowledgeable about, and responsive to, different types of abuse as well as issues around exploitation and radicalisation and extremism.

- Records are securely stored and the paperwork for pupils who are looked after is comprehensive. Plans for these pupils are clear so that their progress can be easily measured. Records of bullying show that there are a few incidents and that they are dealt with swiftly.
- The school works effectively with parents and external agencies to keep pupils safe. The parents with whom inspectors spoke are happy that the school is a safe place and they have no concerns about safeguarding.
- Safeguarding awareness among early years staff is good. The most vulnerable pupils and those in the resourced provision are particularly well protected. Staff are vigilant and trained to a high standard.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across the school is variable and does not offer consistently high expectations for pupils' learning. The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are not challenged to make as much progress as they could. Some of the pupil premium grant has been used to employ additional teachers but this approach has not been fully successful in improving the rates of pupils' progress.
- Challenge within lessons is not sufficient to stretch the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils. The standards expected of pupils in their learning are not high enough. In some lessons observed, pupils reported that they found the work too easy. Time is wasted and some pupils switch off, which gives rise to some low-level disruption. Where the most able pupils and the most able disadvantaged pupils are taught from the same starting points as the rest of the class, their thinking is not stretched. Work in pupils' books shows a lack of challenge to be typical over time.
- Where teaching in mathematics is most effective, it addresses pupils' misconceptions and uses these as learning points. However, this type of teaching is not embedded across the school. Some teaching is typified by closed questioning that does not allow pupils the opportunity to develop or apply their thinking.
- The teaching of reading is variable. Reading materials are not matched to the ability of pupils and the rate of progress is slow. The most able readers do not make as much progress as they should. Pupils are not always encouraged to read with expression and intonation. By contrast, in key stage 1 teachers and teaching assistants question pupils effectively and structure their learning well.
- Although additional tasks are set for most-able pupils, they do not provide sufficient challenge.
- Leaders have implemented a new system for tracking pupils' progress. The school's information is starting to show improvements in pupils' achievements, especially those of disadvantaged pupils and the most able disadvantaged pupils. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities similarly shows signs of

improvement.

- Since the last inspection, leaders have taken steps to provide teaching assistants with more support and training to be able to support pupils' development, particularly in phonics. As a result, the school has seen a rising trend of attainment in the Year 1 phonics check results towards the national average. Teaching assistants in the early years resourced provision who support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are effective at supporting pupils' learning by modelling language and interacting with pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud to be part of their school. Their new uniforms and the opportunity they have had to redesign the school's logo have fostered a strong sense of belonging and pride in their appearance.
- At lunchtimes older pupils support younger ones as part of the school's 'playground buddies' scheme. This enables a purposeful and busy environment where pupils play together well.
- Pupils describe how they can take steps to keep themselves safe online and speak positively about a recent workshop that focused on road safety.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities like running the school tuck shop, sitting on the school council and meeting with governors as part of the safety and well-being council.
- School records show that bullying is rare and pupils agree that there are a few instances which are tackled effectively by teachers when they do occur. Pupils are fully aware of what bullying is and how they can take steps to make sure it does not happen or who they can go to if it does happen.
- When discussing matters of equality, pupils are very reflective and are respectful of others' views and opinions. However, pupils report that derogatory language is used occasionally, mainly in the use of 'gay' as a negative term. Although this does not happen frequently, pupils feel that such language use is not dealt with effectively by staff.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils do not always behave well in lessons because the level of challenge does not engage them in their learning.
- Pupils' absence overall remains high and the school is aware that more needs to be done to continue to support parents to make sure that pupils attend school more regularly. Since the last inspection, the school has gone to great lengths to support parents and reduce persistent absenteeism. The school has appointed a pastoral lead

who has been effective in reducing some of the most persistent absence. The establishment of a free breakfast club has ensured that pupils attend school and have something to eat prior to the start of the school day.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well with their behaviour in the early years resourced provision.
- Around school, pupils are generally well-mannered, polite and friendly.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, attainment has been low. The school's own assessment data shows that pupils' progress requires improvement in most year groups across reading writing and mathematics. Because of leaders' overly generous self-evaluation, actions have not been identified to provide support for different pupil groups quickly enough, for example in challenging the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils. Teachers are not given the direction they need to make a difference and the low targets set for their performance reinforce low expectations.
- Pupils are capable of a higher level of reasoning than is demanded by the tasks set for them in lessons. In mathematics, pupils are able to do calculations mentally when the work set is asking them to do them using written methods. In English, pupils swiftly and accurately apply punctuation to create clauses but their understanding of how to use these devices is not developed enough and they are asked to repeat the process of punctuating further examples without challenge.
- The most able disadvantaged pupils do not exceed the expected standard in reading, writing or mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- In Year 1 there has been a steady increase in the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics check.
- Leaders have improved assessment procedures and they can now identify more accurately where additional support is needed to help pupils. The assessment leader has put support programmes in place. Assessment information shows improvements in rates of progress for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils who are looked after, or who have been adopted from care, achieve well due to the clear targets on their personal plans.
- Children in the resourced early years provision are supported well by their teaching assistants and make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils' skills in subjects other than English and mathematics are developing. Their geographical, scientific and mathematical understanding is shown in their work on daily and seasonal weather patterns.
- Scientific work allows pupils to practise their investigative and explorative skills and the coverage of scientific vocabulary in some areas of study is strong, for example in a study of soluble and insoluble materials.
- Pupils value other aspects of their learning that contribute to their independence and team-building skills, including the residential trips that they enjoy in Years 4 and 6. They develop perseverance and team-building skills, including through the military

school challenges in Year 5.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The leadership of the early years requires improvement because leaders are not using performance information to support their plans to improve provision. Children arrive at the school from very low starting points and throughout the early years they make progress towards meeting a good level of development. However, few children by the end of Reception exceed this standard.
- Early years provision is not yet good because some adults do not interact well enough with children to support their learning. Inspectors observed on more than one occasion that children are left to wander without any purpose, while adults missed opportunities to further children's learning; they did not engage them well in conversation. However, in another class effective support was seen for children's individual phonic development. Similarly, the outdoor play was purposefully set up so that children could solve problems for themselves when making mud pies or work collaboratively with other children during water play activities.
- Learning in the resourced provision in early years is well supported by knowledgeable teaching assistants who effectively model language and behaviour for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Information held by the school shows that the proportion of disadvantaged children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception last year was above average when compared with children nationally.
- Children are safe and well behaved. They respond well to adults and access resources independently. Staff in the early years are vigilant and have a very good awareness of safeguarding issues and they make sure that the early years statutory welfare requirements are met.
- As a result of the professional development provided by the local authority, early years staff have improved continuity for pupils moving from one year group to the next; this is helping children to be ready for Year 1.
- The school is engaging parents in a number of ways including providing curriculum evenings so that parents can help their children at home. Partnerships with external agencies also provide further support for children in the early years.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 104910 |
| Local authority | Sefton |
| Inspection number | 10019788 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 224 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Father John Harris |
| Headteacher | Mr Matthew Byrne |
| Telephone number | 01515 257497 |
| Website | www.holyspiritcatholicprimary.co.uk |
| Email address | admin.holyspirit@schools.sefton.gov.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 19–20 November 2014. |

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about: the pupil premium; governors' information and duties; safeguarding and child protection; and the Equalities Act 2010 and related policies and objectives on its website.
- This school is an average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school has specially resourced provision in the nursery for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.

- Children attend the Nursery class on a part-time basis and the Reception class on a full-time basis.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in each class. They looked through a range of pupils' work. They also observed teaching assistants teach small groups of pupils.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally in groups and informally around school. They observed some pupils reading as part of their guided reading sessions.
- Inspectors spoke with some parents at the start of the day but could not take into account the views of the four parents who completed Ofsted's online survey because there were less than 10 responses.
- They made observations of pupils' behaviour at the beginning of the day, at lunchtimes, when pupils were moving in and around the school and during lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, governors, senior leaders and a representative from the local authority and the diocese.
- They observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and its areas for development. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors took account of 28 staff responses to the online questionnaire.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Tina Cleugh

Ofsted Inspector

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