

St Anne's and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School, Accrington

Sandy Lane, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 2AN

Inspection dates

17–18 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Considerable staff absence over the past two years has been a crucial factor in the school's lack of progress since the last inspection.
- The enthusiastic headteacher, well supported by other leaders, has tried admirably to carry the weight of responsibility, but has, at times, been diverted from maintaining a strategic focus.
- Planned actions are not routinely evaluated to check that they have been beneficial to pupils. As a consequence, these actions have not always led to improvements.
- The teaching and learning across the school are not consistently good. Policies and procedures are not applied rigorously. In some classes, not enough is expected of the pupils.
- A lack of challenge in some lessons means that the most able pupils do not achieve as well as they could, especially in reading and mathematics.
- There has been a sharp decline in the number of pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics check at the end of Year 1. This is now below the national average.
- Some pupils lack pride in their work and do not give of their best. The behaviour of some of these pupils interrupts learning in lessons.
- The wider curriculum is not sufficiently well planned to allow children to develop their skills and knowledge as they move through the school. Activities do not sufficiently challenge pupils in science.

The school has the following strengths

- The early years provision is a strength of the school. The children are taught well and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Most pupils show great respect for each other and are given many chances to show what responsible citizens they can be.
- The work of teaching assistants, highlighted in the last inspection report as a weakness, is now of a much higher quality. Their support and guidance are helping those pupils who have gaps in their knowledge and understanding.
- The school's strong ethos and values are a driving force in promoting pupils' overall good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that all plans are more frequently checked and evaluated
 - building on the start made this year in spreading the responsibility for formulating and implementing improvement plans more widely among staff
 - tightening up on the way policies and procedures are communicated to pupils, staff and parents, so that there is greater consistency of practice across the school
 - further developing middle leadership by sharing best practice both within the school, and through exposure to excellence in other settings and organisations.
- Improve the overall quality of teaching so that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable, by:
 - ensuring that the most able pupils are given more difficult work in lessons, especially in reading and mathematics
 - building on the improvements in the teaching of phonics this year by increasing the difficulty of activities within these lessons
 - setting higher expectations of pupils' presentation of their work
 - making sure that the policy for managing behaviour is implemented consistently throughout the school
 - raising the quality of teaching in science so that there is greater depth to the learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, there has been a series of staff absences that have undoubtedly affected the capacity of leaders to make all the necessary improvements required. There is still too much inconsistency in the effectiveness of leaders' work. However, from the beginning of this academic year, the staff situation has slowly improved and the leadership team is beginning to move forward once again with renewed momentum.
- Following his appointment shortly after the last inspection, the headteacher has commendably taken much responsibility upon his shoulders. This load is now becoming lighter thanks to the development of able middle leaders, who are more involved in planned actions. This group of leaders can already point to improved teaching in some classes as a result of their efforts.
- It is still too early to evaluate the impact of this work on pupils' attainment. Progress for pupils remains patchy. The turnover of staff has meant that it has been difficult for leaders to embed systems and routines to ensure a consistently good quality of teaching and learning.
- Leaders have a generally accurate picture of the effectiveness of the school's current work, and plans are in place to push forward improvements. They are less successful in ensuring that the whole school community is aware of the specifics of these plans. This means that actions do not have a quick enough impact on improvement.
- The arrangements for the management of staff performance are in place. Where appropriate, the targets that are set for teachers are linked to pupils' attainment and progress. This is beginning to lead to improvements, showing that there is good capacity within the leadership team to bring about positive change.
- The funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used effectively, for example in the support given to improve these pupils' writing. However, leaders are less sure about the impact of other parts of the planned spending. Too little weight is given to how the actions in the plan affect pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders have introduced a growing number of sports activities linked to the primary school physical education and sport funding. Pupils appreciate the extra-curricular activities they have, which range from cross-country running to tag rugby. The newly appointed staff have responded well to the opportunity to manage this area of the school's work.
- The school's ethos and values are rooted in service and mutual respect. These are understood well by pupils, who treat each other very well. Those pupils who are potentially more vulnerable are being cared for well, and despite the current absence of the school's coordinator for the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, staff have the appropriate skills to address the specific needs of this group of pupils.
- Leaders have ensured that the school is active in its local community, especially the two parishes that it serves. Leaders are very active in ensuring that overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed well.

- Support from the local authority has been beneficial, especially to the work of middle leaders. This has assisted in the distribution of leadership responsibilities across the school, although leaders are aware that there is still some way to go to make this fully effective.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is determined to secure success for the school. Governors are regular visitors to school, taking time to participate in shared monitoring activities. As a result, they have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are ready to challenge school leaders through informed questions.
- Governors' wide range of skills helps the school in its work. For example, the designated safeguarding governor is a fount of knowledge due to her expertise in this area. Recently, she trained all staff in their role within the government's 'Prevent' duty.
- Governors have provided good support during the prolonged period of staffing uncertainty. They meet their statutory duties in ensuring that funding for promoting sport and pupils' health and well-being and to support disadvantaged pupils is spent well and safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Named officers are suitably trained and an up-to-date policy is in place.
- All staff have received timely training updates, including in the 'Prevent' duty.
- There is a culture in the school to promote each child's individuality and uniqueness. Pupils know whom to go to if they are worried.
- Staff are aware of their responsibilities to keep children safe and monitor any individual concerns with suitable vigilance.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment are not good because the quality is inconsistent across the school. When teaching is good, learning is rich and challenging, but this is not yet typical for some pupils.
- The planning of lessons needs improvement because many activities are set for all pupils regardless of their ability. This prevents the most able pupils' learning being at greater depth through more challenging content.
- The teaching of reading has improved since September 2016. A greater emphasis on questioning, coupled with more training for staff, mean that pupils are making better progress, especially in Years 5 and 6.
- Assessment data is not used effectively, nor shared well enough. For example, more information shared between staff in the early years and those in key stage 1 might assist in setting higher expectations for phonics activities in Year 1 and Year 2.

- The school's policy of using 'fix-it time', during which teachers and pupils identify errors and the next steps in learning, has added to a greater focus on marking and feedback, an area highlighted in the last inspection as requiring improvement. Pupils report this to have helped them in their learning, although again it is not consistently applied throughout the school.
- The standard of pupils' spoken English is not always replicated in their written work. In Year 5, a succession of boys offered detailed verbal evaluations of the predicament that Macbeth finds himself in at a particular part of the Shakespeare play, using varied and appropriate vocabulary. This quality is not seen to the same degree in pupils' creative writing.
- The support provided by teaching assistants is an area of teaching that has improved since the last inspection. They have provided much needed stability in those classes where there has been teachers' absence. They are confident when teaching to small groups, possess good subject knowledge and question pupils carefully, resulting in good gains for pupils.
- The quality of teaching in mathematics is variable across the school. Staff are successful in identifying gaps in learning and then addressing more individual needs, but are less successful in developing more refined reasoning skills for the most able pupils. Repeating similar calculations excessively prevents these pupils from moving on to tackle more difficult mathematical problems.
- The management of behaviour in some lessons is also inconsistent in its effectiveness, and detracts from good learning. In some lessons, pupils are so engrossed in their learning that they hardly notice the door opening. However, in a few others, distractions and calling out appear habitual and this interrupts the flow of learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The regular changes to school staff have affected pupils' personal development. This is because there has been an inconsistent approach in helping pupils become successful learners. Some find it difficult to concentrate, or lack the resilience to extend their own learning.
- Attitudes to written work reflect similar inconsistencies. Whilst there are many groups of pupils who show great pride in their work, there are others who do not.
- The school caters for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. It has introduced a range of opportunities for pupils to be leaders within their school community and beyond. The colour-coded sweatshirts make it very clear whom to go to for support and guidance. Speaking with these pupils, it is obvious that they take on these roles in a mature and sensitive way.
- The increase in the number of sports clubs and competitions has allowed many pupils to develop both their physical health but also their identity as part of a team. This has instilled a greater sense of self-confidence in some pupils.

- Pupils report being in a safe and secure environment. Bullying is rare and both pupils and parents are satisfied with the way staff deal with any isolated incidents. This care is extended to e-safety. Appropriate filters are in place and pupils speak confidently about how the school has helped them cope with the online world.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- There is a wide variance in the behaviour of pupils. Whilst many show exemplary behaviour and are immersed in their learning, others are often distracted and lack concentration.
- Where it requires most improvement, in some key stage 2 classes, it is typified by pupils not having the right equipment, calling out and distracting others. This affects the pace of learning in these lessons.
- Outside, pupils play with each other happily and treat each other with respect. There is a sense of shared purpose, with pupils pleased when their friends and classmates do well.
- Attendance is in line with the national average and the importance of good attendance is promoted well by staff. Pupils are prompt, enjoy school and like the revised starting arrangements for the day where they can calmly look at previous learning and correct any mistakes.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- For many pupils, first-hand inspection evidence seen in books since September suggests that pupils have made good gains in their learning, but there are still too many pockets of underachievement. For this reason, outcomes still require improvement.
- Pupils' academic development is too uneven. This inconsistency extends across all subject areas. Areas of the school where progress is weaker are generally in those year groups that have been most affected by staff absences and changes.
- In 2016, rates of progress were marginally below the national average for pupils leaving Year 6. Evidence collected by inspectors, both in lessons and from pupils' books, suggests that this is similar for some groups currently at the school, for example, boys in Year 3 and Year 4. This contrasts with Year 6, where all pupils are making rapid progress this year in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2016, the number of pupils achieving the expected level in the national phonics check at the end of Year 1 decreased for the second consecutive year and is now below the national average. The school has confronted this decline with improved teaching, and with training for staff, but expectations are still not high enough for some pupils, despite evident improvement in Year 1 pupils' overall grasp of phonics.

- From a good base at the end of the Reception Year, pupils' progress in key stage 1 still requires improvement despite higher expectations set by staff this year. In 2016, the proportion of pupils gaining a higher level of understanding in reading or mathematics was low compared with national figures. This contrasts with writing, where it was above. This highlights the inconsistencies in expectations.
- The most able pupils are not achieving the standards of which they are capable. This has been most notable in reading, but there are signs this year that staff have improved the quality of questioning and raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, progress in reading is accelerating.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils in some classes can be quite small, but taking into account the range of year groups, this group's progress is similar to that of their peers.
- Pupils who have underachieved in the past are faring better this year because of the well-directed support. Similarly, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are keeping pace with other pupils thanks to equally effective support.
- Pupils' quality of learning across other curriculum areas is equally inconsistent. For example, whilst pupils cover a lot of work in science, activities often lack challenge.

Early years provision

Good

- The Reception class is a hive of activity. It provides the children with a flying start to their education. Respectful relationships and high expectations are at the heart of the good standards achieved by children overall.
- The early years provision is led and managed expertly by the school's acting deputy headteacher. She is ambitious for the children and sets high standards.
- Since the last inspection, there has been a rising trend in the proportion of children attaining a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. It is now slightly above the national average and represents good progress from the children's starting points. Although over time, both boys and disadvantaged children have achieved less well, current evidence indicates that their achievement is now rising.
- Children come from a range of local nursery providers and backgrounds. Regular visits and activities before the move to the early years ensure that children settle well. They quickly adopt positive learning characteristics, such as independence and communication. However, the school's involvement with parents does decrease after these initial stages and some opportunities are missed to involve parents more in the children's learning journeys.
- Teaching in the early years is good. All staff are constantly on the lookout for ways in which children can follow their interests and deepen their learning. For example, one member of staff led a scientific discussion surrounding the properties of ice balloons in a water tray, skilfully eliciting advanced language from a group of boys. This was typical of the teaching seen by inspectors.
- The work of teaching assistants is a strength. They are highly skilled in knowing when to intervene and alter the learning focus, or how to question children incisively.

- The assessment of children's learning is effective. All staff contribute to planning, ensuring that children's interests are taken into account. This good planning helps to ensure that an appropriate balance of areas of learning is maintained throughout the year.
- The teaching of phonics is good. However, greater communication between early years staff and those in Year 1 at the end of the year could ensure that Year 1 pupils are then fully stretched during their phonics lessons.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective because all adults share a common responsibility for the welfare of the children, ensuring that children feel and are safe.
- The children are typically good communicators. They are respectful of each other and polite to adults. This good behaviour has been vital in establishing a culture where all are valued and cared for well.

School details

Unique reference number	119656
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10024093

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	297
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr B Holden
Headteacher	Mr Darren Mussell
Telephone number	01254 233019
Website	www.sasj.co.uk
Email address	head@sasj.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 January 2015

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is similar to that found nationally, as is the proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average.
- Since the last inspection, there have been considerable absences for both senior staff and a range of other teachers and support staff. The current headteacher took up post in April 2015.
- The school is receiving ongoing support from the local authority's monitoring and intervention team.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classrooms to observe lessons and look at pupils' work. They also spent time looking through pupils' books from earlier in the year.
- Two meetings were held with members of the governing body, in addition to meetings with a representative from the local authority, and senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors spoke with a number of parents and took into account the 39 views expressed on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- Three planned discussions took place with pupils, as well as other conversations in school and on the playground. Views from pupil and staff questionnaires were also taken into account.
- Inspectors analysed the assessment information presented by the school, plus a range of other key school documents, including those related to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Jeremy Barnes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Adrian Francis	Ofsted Inspector
Barbara Dutton	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.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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 children looked after, 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/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.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017