

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Burnley

Holcombe Drive, Burnley, Lancashire BB10 4BH

Inspection dates

31 January–1 February 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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- School has undergone a period of turbulence and standards have slipped. Senior leaders carry too much responsibility because so many staff are new to the school.
- Pupils do not make good progress across key stage 2 in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching is not consistently good particularly in key stage 2.
- Teachers do not consistently plan learning to ensure that activities challenge all groups of pupils to reach their full potential.
- When pupils find work too easy or too hard, teachers do not adapt tasks promptly.
- There are too few opportunities to apply mathematical skills across a range of subjects.
- Reading skills are not taught effectively at key stage 2. Pupils who are disadvantaged, including those who are also most able, are not achieving their full potential and reaching standards of which they are capable.
- Middle leaders require further support to develop their areas of responsibility.
- A small minority of pupils do not attend school regularly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Early years provision is good. Most children reach a good level of development by the end of Reception Year. Leadership and teaching in early years is good.
- Good teaching in key stage 1 enables pupils to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make good progress in writing throughout the school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the effective support they receive.
- This is a happy school in which all pupils are valued. The vast majority of pupils enjoy school and feel safe. They are cared for very well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching in key stage 2 so that pupils, especially the disadvantaged and the most able, make rapid progress by:
 - teachers setting work that enables pupils to reach higher standards, particularly for the middle- and lower-attaining pupils, including disadvantaged pupils
 - teachers adapting work during lessons when pupils find the work too easy or too hard
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to develop and apply key skills across a wide range of subjects
 - ensuring that more pupils, particularly the disadvantaged and most able disadvantaged, attain expected levels and higher levels by the end of Year 6
 - providing consistently engaging and high-quality reading and comprehension activities in all key stage 2 classes.
- Strengthen leadership and management in order to raise standards across the school by increasing support for middle leaders, so that they can accelerate improvements in their areas of responsibility and enable senior leaders to concentrate on school improvement.
- Improve the attendance of the small minority who do not regularly attend school.

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

An external review of governance of the school 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

- Almost all middle leaders are relatively new to their roles and this has led to senior leaders carrying too much responsibility. External support from the local authority, instigated by the headteacher, is at an early stage in building the capacity of middle leaders to accelerate improvements in their areas of responsibility. It is too early to see the impact on pupils' progress.
- The pupil premium funding has not been used effectively in accelerating progress in reading and mathematics for disadvantaged and the most able disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2.
- There are not enough opportunities for parents to develop how they can work with their children beyond the school environment, particularly in developing reading skills. Most parents are positive about leaders' work to ensure equality of opportunities for all pupils and families. Overall, most parents are positive about how the school is led and managed and the communication between school and home.
- Leaders understand that pupils need more opportunities to develop and practise their reading and mathematical skills across a range of subjects. Topic work engages learners and has a positive impact on pupils' personal development but the progress being made in key stage 2 is not rapid enough. Extra-curricular activities include a range of sporting activities through Burnley Sports Partnership.
- The headteacher is a determined and experienced leader who ensures that all members of the school community are working together to improve the education they provide for their pupils. Since the previous inspection, the school has faced a number of unavoidable challenges. The vast majority of teachers were appointed during the last six months. Seven of nine teachers joined in September 2016. The headteacher has established a positive team culture that is determined to drive school improvement.
- At the instigation of the headteacher, teachers have been working with specialist consultants from the local authority since the autumn term 2016, to drive whole-school improvements. Although it is too early to see the impact on pupils' progress, there is evidence of improvement in teaching, particularly in writing.
- The senior leadership team works well together and has been effective in improving writing since the last inspection. Senior leaders are trying to reach consistency among teachers who have different experiences and backgrounds.
- The senior leaders, together with consultants from the local authority, check the quality of teaching systematically. Leaders, including the governing body, know there is some inconsistency in teaching and show determination to ensure that there is high-quality teaching across the school. However, their checks have not had an impact on all teaching. In mathematics and reading, the quality of teaching remains inconsistent across key stage 2. However, improvements in the early years and key stage 1 have been strengthened and sustained since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher has strengthened systems for managing the performance of staff through regular checks on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning throughout the

school. Senior leaders ensure that newly qualified teachers and those in the early stages of their career are supported effectively.

- The primary school physical education and sports grant is used very effectively and has increased pupils' participation in sport and widened the range of sports to include gymnastics.
- Spiritual, moral and social development is a strength. Links to the local community, including the local church, are strong. Pupils' understanding of other cultures is weaker and lacks depth. Regular learning about British values means that children are prepared for life in modern Britain.

Governance of the school

- Governors are very committed to the school. Along with the headteacher, governors are passionate about making a significant contribution to the community and raising aspirations for all children.
- As regular visitors, governors play an active part in the life of the school. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors have a good range of skills from industry, business and education. They audit these skills regularly to ascertain what might be required from new governors.
- Governors are clear about how pupils' outcomes compare with those nationally and they hold leaders to account for the work that is being done to diminish differences in performance of different groups of pupils. They are determined to raise the outcomes achieved at key stage 2.
- Governors supported the headteacher's decision to ask for support from the local authority to improve the quality of teaching. They keep a check on finances of the school. However, the use of pupil premium funding has not been effective for key stage 2 pupils. The sports grant is used effectively and the overall impact can be seen in pupils understanding how they need to lead healthy lifestyles and keep active.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The governing body and headteacher are committed to the safeguarding of children and work hard to establish a school culture of vigilance. The governors ensure that arrangements for safeguarding meet current guidance, including relevant checks on all adults working with pupils. Risk assessments are completed to cover key aspects of school life, such as educational visits.
- The school's investment in pastoral support and successful work with external agencies makes a significant contribution to ensuring that children are cared for and kept safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because too many of the pupils currently in the school have not achieved well enough in key stage 2. There have been significant, unavoidable changes to teaching staff since the previous inspection. Although there are signs of improvement in pupils' progress, the quality of teaching is not consistently

good across Years 3 to 6. Teaching does not build on the good-quality learning the pupils experience from Reception to Year 2.

- Some activities are not planned to meet the learning needs of all groups of pupils, and particularly the disadvantaged and most able disadvantaged. This limits the amount of progress pupils make. At times, some pupils find the work too easy and others find the work too hard. When this is the case, teachers are not always swift enough in modifying the activities to meet the needs of learners, and this slows progress.
- There is not enough consistency in challenging the most able and the most able disadvantaged. At times, in mathematics, tasks are completed mentally and pupils have to wait for other pupils to complete their work before they are presented with further challenge.
- The teaching of mathematics is variable and does not consistently extend pupils' understanding of how to apply their basic skills to a range of scenarios. In lower key stage 2, pupils were seen working out sequences of numbers. They were applying themselves well but lacked the ability to check their answers. For example, when within a sequence of even numbers pupils started writing odd numbers it was not obvious to pupils that they had made an error.
- Additional support in mathematics is being provided for Year 6 pupils to close the gaps in their knowledge. However, there are not enough opportunities across other subjects to use and develop mathematical skills.
- The teaching of phonics is strong in the early years and key stage 1. However, in key stage 2, it was evident that some pupils are not systematically using the blending of sounds to work out unfamiliar words. Too often, they guess at words that do not relate to the letters and sounds, and this slows progress.
- The teaching of reading is improving but is inconsistent across years. Pupils in Year 6 value time allocated to reading and demonstrated good understanding of what they had read and could compare the class book to another book they had read. They could identify similarities and differences between two books. However, there was wasted time when tasks were undemanding and did not deepen pupils' knowledge.
- The teaching of writing has improved. Teachers' good subject knowledge helps pupils to develop well-structured and interesting sentences. Across the school, teachers provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities to write for different purposes and, as a result, they make good progress.
- During a time of significant changes in teaching staff, teaching assistants have provided much needed stability for pupils. They are deployed very well to support individual pupils or small groups and help them to learn.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities enjoy learning and make good progress. This is because the work they are set and the support they receive helps them with their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- All staff and governors are committed to working together within an extremely welcoming and caring ethos. The welfare and safety of pupils is integral to the work of the school. Almost all parents are very appreciative of the work of the staff. The vast majority agree that the school keeps their children safe.
- A very small minority of parents raised concerns around bullying. On investigation, inspectors found that the school takes appropriate action on the rare occasions that bullying or perceived bullying takes place. Pupils say that bullying is rare. They know that bullying can take different forms, including physical bullying, name-calling and cyber bullying. They have very positive relationships with staff in school, with whom they feel they would share any concerns should they arise.
- Good procedures ensure that pupils are safe. Staff are well trained in how to identify any concerns that a child might be at risk of harm, and this includes staff who are not directly employed by the school but by the local authority. Children are taught how to keep safe. They have a good understanding of internet safety and avoiding radicalisation. Staff work exceptionally well with a wide range of external agencies to support pupils and their families on pastoral matters.
- Older pupils act as buddies for younger children, providing excellent role models and pastoral support for those joining the school. This enables those pupils new to the school to settle quickly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- In class, behaviour is generally good. However, too often, when work is not stimulating or challenging, pupils can drift off task and can disrupt the learning of others.
- Pupils are happy and contribute to the school as a calm and welcoming place. They are polite and talk confidently to teachers and visitors.
- Behaviour in the playgrounds and outdoor areas at breaktimes is well supervised. Older pupils act as playground leaders, and there is play equipment available to pupils to ensure that they are occupied and engaged in meaningful play.
- Attendance is below average. Persistent absence is above average. There is a small minority of children who do not attend school regularly enough and this has a negative effect on their progress. The headteacher works with external agencies but the issues around attendance for a small minority persist.
- The vast majority of parents who spoke to the inspectors believe behaviour in school is generally good and they feel their children are safe in school. The school responds appropriately when any concerns are expressed.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress in reading and mathematics is not consistently good across key stage 2. The rate of progress, particularly in reading and mathematics, during key stage 2 is variable and this is partly as a result of unavoidable turbulence in staffing.
- The pupil premium is not effective in ensuring that disadvantaged, and the most able disadvantaged, pupils in key stage 2 make expected or better progress in reading and

mathematics. There are improvement of these groups seen in progress in early years and key stage 1.

- The majority of most-able pupils make expected progress, but few do better than this because work in reading and mathematics is not pitched at a level to stretch and challenge these pupils.
- The children settle well in the early years and make a good start to their school life. Most enter key stage 1 with a good foundation in all areas of the early years. At key stage 1, pupils continue to make good progress in their learning. Pupils are reaching standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are close to the national average by the time they join key stage 2.
- In key stage 2, pupils' progress in reading is too variable. The results of the 2016 standardised assessment tests showed the proportion of pupils who achieved the national standard was well below the national average. However, in key stage 1 there is an improving picture, with pupils making good progress.
- In the early years, children get off to a good start in developing their reading skills. Teachers' increased focus on the teaching of phonics is resulting in improvements in standards of reading at key stage 1. In the Year 1 phonics check, the percentage of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieving expected standards has improved year on year and is close to the national average. Parents are encouraged to read with their children, but not all are fully engaged with this activity at home.
- In key stage 2, progress in reading slows. While pupils engage in comprehension activities, this work does not always stretch and challenge pupils to reach their full potential. Pupils' books recording their reading activities show that at times tasks are undemanding. There is evidence that too often they are being asked to draw pictures, and this wastes valuable learning time.
- In mathematics, the pupils develop their numerical skills. However, they are not given enough time to develop mathematical concepts and apply them to a variety of problems across different subjects. As a result, some pupils are not making good enough progress in mathematics. In 2016, the proportion of pupils who achieved the national standard was well below the national average.
- Since the previous inspection, improving writing has been a priority. Current data and work in pupils' books show that most pupils, including the disadvantaged and the most able disadvantaged, make good progress across most classes.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. Leaders identify the needs of these pupils well and provide good support for them to make effective progress.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils has improved in the early years and key stage 1. However, in key stage 2, there is a significant difference between these groups and others in school, and compared to the national average. This is particularly so in reading and mathematics. Overall, better teaching has enabled more to gain confidence in their numerical skills and basic calculations. Gaps in applying skills linked to previous disturbances in teaching are not fully closed and pupils lack confidence, but there are sign of an improving picture. Pupils at the end of Year 2 are now well prepared for learning in key stage 2.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the early years with varied skills and abilities. Those who have not attended the school's Nursery have skills that are often lower than those broadly typical for their age. They make good progress and the proportion achieving a good level of development by the time they leave Reception is close to the national average. This success reflects well on the commitment and high expectations of the early years team.
- Children are happy and settle quickly into school life because leaders carefully plan their induction. There are good links with local nurseries. There are opportunities for children and their parents to attend sessions in school before the children join Nursery and/or Reception. This helps the children to settle quickly when they start school.
- Leadership of the early years is good and ensures that adults accurately assess the children's progress across all aspects of the early years. Records of children's achievements, including children's work and photographic evidence, clearly show the good progress children have made. Next steps in learning are identified and followed up to ensure that the children improve as intended.
- Teaching is effective and there is a calm and purposeful environment in the early years. Adults know children well and teachers plan interesting work that covers all areas of learning and links carefully to children's interests and imaginations. The children behave well and develop good attitudes to learning. They listen attentively and concentrate on what they are asked to do. For example, after a phonics session, children were asked to write a sentence and then check their spellings/sentences.
- School leaders check on the quality of teaching in the early years and support teachers and teaching assistants to improve their work through professional development.
- Every opportunity is used to maximise learning. For example, while children were drinking their milk at breaktime, adults ensured that each child contributed to a conversation about the previous day's session when they had been learning to ride bicycles. They discussed what they had enjoyed and aspects of safety, such as why they wore helmets while riding the bicycles. This developed their social skills alongside their understanding of safety when riding a bicycle.
- Good links exist with external agencies whose roles are to support children in their early development. Children's welfare and safety are well catered for, with security given a high priority. The early years is a very safe and secure environment. The use of pupil premium funding ensures that they make the same good progress as others, with the vast majority of disadvantaged pupils reaching a good level of development, preparing them well for key stage 1.

School details

Unique reference number	119703
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10024254

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	243
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ellen Daley
Headteacher	Ian Jones
Telephone number	01282 427546
Website	www.st-marys-burnley.lancs.sch.uk/
Email address	head@st-marys-burnley.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 December 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school does not meet the government's floor standard, which is the minimum requirement for pupils' progress and attainment.
- St Mary's is an above average sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion who receive special educational needs support is above the national average.

- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.
- Significant, unavoidable turbulence in staffing since the previous inspection has contributed to weaker teaching.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning and made a number of short visits to classrooms and watched sessions where pupils were taught in small groups.
- Meetings were held with staff and with two representatives from the local authority.
- A meeting was held with six governors.
- The inspectors talked informally in class and at breaks. Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- A number of documents were scrutinised, including the school's own information about pupils' learning and progress, planning and monitoring documents, minutes of governor meetings, the development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding information.
- There were not enough responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) to generate a report. Inspectors consulted informally with parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspectors took account of the views of staff and pupils gained from formal and informal discussions. There were no responses to the online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Rigby	Ofsted Inspector
Kevin Ward	Ofsted Inspector

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