

St Cleopas Church of England Junior Mixed and Infant School

Beresford Road, Liverpool, Merseyside L8 4RP

Inspection dates

7–8 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	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Outcomes have declined since the last inspection, particularly in mathematics.
- The most able pupils in the school, including those who are disadvantaged, do not make consistently good progress.
- Actions resulting from leaders' monitoring have not eradicated inconsistency in teaching. Consequently, the quality of teaching is variable and pupils' outcomes are not improving quickly enough to be good across the school.
- Assessment systems in early years are not effective in identifying the most able children. Consequently, expectations of their progress are not high enough.
- The school's organisation of the curriculum means some subjects are not covered in enough depth and it is difficult for subject leaders to monitor how well they are taught.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding independently.
- Handwriting is not consistently taught, and this affects pupils' fluency in writing and the presentation of their written work.
- Attendance is below average, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Evaluation of the impact of pupil premium spending on pupils' outcomes is imprecise.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting head of school is ably supported by the interim executive headteacher and by the local authority.
- School leaders and governors have correctly identified priorities for improvement and are committed to raising standards.
- Teaching in upper key stage 2 is strong.
- The teaching of phonics is strong and leads to pupils attaining above average standards.
- Behaviour around the school is good. Pupils feel safe and have a positive attitude to learning. Pastoral care is very strong.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make more rapid progress leading to good outcomes by:
 - ensuring that teachers extend the most able pupils by providing them with work that challenges them to reach the standards of which they are capable
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding independently, through extended writing and mathematical problem solving
 - improving the accuracy of assessment of pupils' skills on entry to the early years, to ensure that all pupils, including the most able, are provided with learning opportunities that are challenging
 - developing a systematic approach to the teaching of handwriting to enable pupils to develop fluency.
- Improve leadership and management including governance by:
 - ensuring that the monitoring of teaching leads to swift action to minimise inconsistencies and share the most effective practice in school
 - ensuring that the additional funding provided by the pupil premium has a positive impact on the learning outcomes for disadvantaged pupils
 - improving the organisation of the curriculum to ensure that subjects are covered in appropriate depth and that standards are closely monitored
 - ensuring that governors have a good understanding of how to challenge the school on the achievement of key groups of pupils, such as the most able and disadvantaged
 - improving attendance, particularly of those pupils who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

An external review of how the pupil premium grant is used should be undertaken to establish how this aspect of the school's work may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not minimised inconsistencies in teaching, learning and assessment across the school. They have developed systems for monitoring teaching and learning. However, this work has not led to swift and effective action being taken in the light of their findings.
- The school has been through an unsettled time during which leadership responsibilities have been reorganised. Some leaders are still developing their skills and the impact of their work is not fully evident.
- The executive headteacher's leadership has been welcomed by the school. He has introduced systems to help the school improve, including the more effective targeting of support for groups of pupils. However, recent initiatives are too new for their impact to be evident in pupils' outcomes.
- The additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is not used to its full potential to ensure raised standards for this group of pupils. The impact of actions is not measured precisely enough and so leaders do not know how effective specific programmes of support are in accelerating the progress of pupils.
- The curriculum includes all the required subjects and is supported by a range of extra-curricular activities and visits. Teachers work hard to make subjects meaningful and enjoyable for pupils. However, leaders have difficulty checking standards in some subjects, other than mathematics and English, to ensure that they are covered in enough depth.
- Pupils learn about British values and embody tolerance and respect through their behaviour. Some of them have difficulty in explaining what the values mean.
- The school's assessment system is new and fit for purpose. The assessment lead is knowledgeable and understands how it needs to be further developed. School leaders acknowledge that data for some classes is not quite accurate, as teachers are grappling to come to terms with new assessment criteria.
- School leaders ensure that the sports premium is used well to help pupils to be active and develop a healthy lifestyle. The sports coordinator's support for teachers has enhanced their skills and confidence in teaching high-quality physical education. There is growing participation in a wide range of competitive and non-competitive sports. The sports coordinator regularly reports to governors on the impact of this work.
- The leader of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has a good knowledge of the needs of pupils across the school. She liaises effectively with pupils, parents, class teachers and external agencies to ensure that support programmes meet the needs of all pupils. There are effective arrangements in place to support pupils as they move to a new key stage and to high school.
- The local authority has provided the school with considerable support. The school improvement partner has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Her work with leaders has a sharp focus on improving teaching and learning.

- Most parents are supportive of all aspects of the school's work. They find school leaders and teachers approachable, and those in difficult situations comment positively on the support they have received from the staff in the school.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is rooted in its ethos. The school's motto, 'Live, Laugh, Learn', is a reference point in the daily lives of the staff and pupils.
- Responses to the staff survey show that the morale of staff is high and that they are proud to belong to the school and support its leaders.
- Staff value the increased opportunities for professional development that are helping them to develop consistency in teaching and learning across the school.
- Performance management arrangements are rigorous and focused on improving the quality of teaching and pupil outcomes.
- The school has benefited from considerable support from the local authority. This has included training for teachers and support for middle leaders and governors. The local authority keeps the school's work under close review. By engaging the executive headteacher, the diocese has bolstered leaders' capacity to secure improvement.

Governance of the school

- Governors recognise that standards are not as good as they should be and have welcomed the support from the diocese to secure interim leadership for the school that is accelerating its improvement.
- Governors are very committed to the school, its pupils and families. They take their role seriously, and have an improving knowledge and understanding of the work of the school and priorities for improvement. Governors are now asking challenging questions about pupils' progress but, as yet, have a limited view of the progress of groups, particularly the most able and the disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors have completed relevant training and take their duties with regards to safeguarding pupils very seriously.
- Governors have not ensured that the school's website complies with requirements. It does not currently publish the information required to comply with The School Information Arrangements 2016. Governors have not recognised that some of the policies are outdated and that parents are not sufficiently informed about the curriculum.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are vigilant; they have a good awareness of the indicators of possible abuse and the procedures to follow should they have concerns about a child's welfare. All staff receive high-quality training and regular updates.
- The safeguarding leader ensures that all policies and procedures are in place and understood by all staff. She is proactive in ensuring a school climate where

safeguarding is paramount. She works closely with external agencies responsible for keeping children safe, and is persistent in following up any concerns.

- The checks made on staff who are new to post meet requirements.
- Pupils say they feel safe. They talk to adults in school if they have a problem because they trust adults to help them.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching does not routinely meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. Assessments are regularly made to see what pupils can and cannot do. However, this information is not used sharply enough to ensure that the work that is planned for pupils is matched to what pupils need to learn. In particular, the most able pupils are not always given work that is challenging.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' work are not consistently high. For example, teachers do not insist on the essentials of writing, such as high-quality presentation. Letter formation and handwriting are not taught systematically. As a result, pupils do not make good progress in these areas.
- In some classes, pupils have insufficient opportunities to sustain extended writing or to solve mathematical problems independently.
- The teaching of mathematics is variable. Some teaching challenges pupils effectively and leads to pupils being able to understand mathematical concepts and develop problem-solving skills. However, in other instances teaching does not deepen pupils' thinking because they are set work that is too easy.
- The vast majority of teaching assistants are effective in supporting pupils' learning. They work with groups and individuals, providing appropriate support and challenge. There is, however, some variability in the effectiveness of deployment of support staff.
- Collaborative work is strong, and pupils enjoy learning with their peers. In one key stage 2 lesson, pupils were learning to construct a balanced argument around whether it would be a good idea to wear slippers in class. Pupils rehearsed and developed their ideas together. They commented that this way of learning was fun and it helped them to structure their argument before writing it down.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are taught well and make good progress. They receive carefully tailored support to enable them to develop the specific skills they require. The sensory nurture room and 'round house' playground facility meet the needs of vulnerable pupils. Consequently, pupils who have struggled to cope with learning and social situations have been taught to manage their emotions and behaviour successfully, so they are able to work and play alongside their peers.
- Phonics teaching is strong in key stage 1. Lessons are well structured and lively. The teaching is highly focused and well matched to the needs of the pupils. There are high expectations of learning and behaviour. Pupils work with enthusiasm and make good progress.
- Pupils are encouraged to read and they are increasingly doing so with fluency and understanding. They talk enthusiastically about authors and books they enjoy reading

at home and in school. The well-equipped school library is an engaging environment the children enjoy using.

- The school's approach to the curriculum engages learners. One year group was learning about the human body. The pupils took the role of 'trainee surgeons' and researched the major organs of the body and their function. They made links with art and produced highly effective images of the heart.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pastoral care is strong. Parents agree that their children are well looked after and staff are approachable if they have any concerns. One parent, new to school, commented, 'my son only started two weeks ago, he has well settled and enjoys coming to school every day'. Another parent said, 'I would recommend this school to anyone, it is such a lovely nurturing environment.'
- Pupils are respectful and tolerant of each other. They warmly welcome new arrivals to school, they help them to settle quickly and make them feel part of the wider school family. They respect one another's different beliefs, including by sharing their personal knowledge of Christianity and Islam during religious education lessons.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners who enjoy coming to school and are happy to talk about their work. They are keen to learn.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know how to stay safe. They are aware of the dangers of the internet and how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying and the distress this can cause. They say that bullying is rare and, if it does happen, it is dealt with quickly and effectively. They understand their role in preventing bullying and bad behaviour.
- The school's motto, written by the children, is 'Live, Laugh, Learn'. Pupils clearly understand the values it promotes, of growing up with a healthy attitude to life.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils say that behaviour in class and around school is good and parents agree with this view. Pupils are polite, well-mannered and welcoming to visitors.
- The school is an orderly place. Playtimes and lunchtimes are organised effectively and pupils behave well as they move around the school.
- From the early years and throughout the school, children's behaviour is good. Pupils work well together, and they cooperate and support each other. A whole-school assembly led by the vicar exemplified this; pupils entered the hall calmly, they sang together and eagerly answered questions, taking time for quiet reflection at the end.

- No pupils have been excluded from school for poor behaviour.
- Attendance is below average, and persistent absence remains high for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school is addressing this issue through its on-going work with families. As a result of the dedicated support provided by the school, there are a significant number of individual cases where attendance has improved.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes have declined since the last inspection. The pupils who left in 2016 made broadly average progress in reading and writing, but their progress in mathematics was weak and the school was in the lowest 10% of schools nationally on this measure. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level in reading and maths was below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils attending the school is high. The pupil premium funding has not improved outcomes sufficiently for this group of pupils. In 2016, disadvantaged pupils performed less well than others nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The most able disadvantaged pupils do not achieve highly enough. In 2016, no disadvantaged pupil attained the higher standard in reading or mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in English grammar, punctuation and spelling in 2016 was below the national average.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 1 was below average in reading, writing, mathematics and science in 2016. There are indications of an improving picture for pupils currently in key stage 1.
- Outcomes in early years have improved over the last three years, although the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development is still below the national average.
- Results in phonics screening at the end of Year 1 have improved and are well above the national average.
- In key stage 2, progress is strong where pupils are engaged in their learning and receive appropriate challenge, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The school's current data indicates an improvement in the progress of mathematics in key stage 2.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points in response to the support they receive.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- A high proportion of children join the nursery and reception classes with knowledge and skills that are lower than those typical for their age. During their time in the early years, all groups make steady progress.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has risen over the last three years but is still below the national average. Consequently, a significant proportion of children are not ready for their transition into Year 1. Disadvantaged

children do not achieve as well as others, and boys do not achieve as well as girls.

- In 2016, all Reception children were assessed as having skills below those typical for their age. Although most children's skill levels are below typical, some children's skills are better developed than this. Assessment of children's skills on entry to the early years is not totally accurate and limits expectations, especially for the most able. This aspect of early years requires improvement.
- Teachers' questioning is effective in encouraging children to talk about their ideas. There are good opportunities for children to use mental mathematics skills. There is, however, a lack of challenge for the most able. In a mathematics lesson, where children were working with numbers up to 10, assessment records showed the most able pupils had mathematical skills higher than this on entry to Reception.
- Teachers are engaging and enthusiastic. They have good relationships with the children. Children's behaviour is good and well managed. Children are calm. They take turns, they cooperate well and they respect each other. Staff work hard to develop children's personal, social and emotional skills.
- Routines are well established from the start of nursery, and children quickly develop independence. They enjoy learning and are safe.
- Leaders have identified writing as an area for development in the early years. Children's letter formation is not developed consistently well.
- Children enjoy choosing activities, particularly indoors. Independent learning areas are well set out and reflect each of the areas of learning. However, the activities provided outside do not always interest or challenge children. The outdoor environment does not interest some of the pupils, particularly girls.
- Early years' staff establish good relationships with parents to encourage children's learning and development. The recent 'build a bridge of books' project has successfully strengthened the links between the home and school by engaging and involving parents in making and using books with their children.

School details

Unique reference number	104613
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10024155

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 controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	248
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Mills
Acting head of school	Ian Fitzgerald
Telephone number	0151 727 1725
Website	www.stcleopas.co.uk
Email address	cleopas-ao@st-cleopas.liverpool.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14-15 th May 2013

Information about this school

- St Cleopas is an average-sized primary school with a nursery.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is higher than in other schools nationally.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of specified information on its website regarding the curriculum.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The previous headteacher left in December 2016. The deputy headteacher has since taken on the role of acting head of school. The diocese has appointed an executive headteacher on an interim basis. The governors are in the process of appointing a

substantive headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Some observations were undertaken with the acting head of school.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and talked with pupils about behaviour, learning and safety.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the acting head of school, teachers with leadership roles, representatives of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body, and two representatives from Liverpool local authority.
- An inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day and took account of 17 free text responses made by parents.
- Inspectors considered 17 responses made by staff to Ofsted's staff survey.
- There was one response to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

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Barbara Harrold	Ofsted Inspector
Tina Cleugh	Ofsted Inspector

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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.

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