

St Teresa's RC Primary School

Redcar Road, Little Lever, Bolton, Lancashire BL3 1EN

Inspection dates

18–19 October 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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders' actions to stem the decline in pupils' outcomes, particularly at the end of key stage 2, have been too slow.
- Checks on teaching, and the impact of new strategies to raise pupils' achievement, lack rigour. This accounts for the variability in teaching across different classes and subjects.
- Feedback to teachers on their performance is weak. It does not enable teachers to understand what they need to do to improve their teaching across the curriculum.
- Governors do not ask enough challenging questions about pupils' progress, especially the achievement of those pupils who are disadvantaged.
- Subject leaders do not have enough influence on teaching. Their role is underdeveloped.
- Subjects other than English and mathematics receive too little attention. This hampers pupils from gaining the skills and knowledge to flourish across the broader curriculum.
- Some teachers do not expect enough from pupils. Consequently, many older pupils lack confidence in their ability to write and the stamina to work as hard as they should.
- The teaching of reading beyond phonics is not taught systematically. It does not help some pupils to read with understanding.
- The most able pupils do not receive sufficient challenge, especially in mathematics.

The school has the following strengths

- Children benefit from strong provision in the early years. They make good progress and enter Year 1 ready to learn.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who attend the resource base provision, blossom due to effective leadership of this area of the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well.
- Effective small group teaching sessions make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning due to the work of skilled teaching assistants.
- Pupils enjoy school and are proud to be part of the St Teresa's family. They behave well, are kind to each other and feel safe.
- Recent improvements are halting the decline. Pupils' achievement is improving, especially in key stage 1 and the early years.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and reduce the remaining variability across different classes and different subjects by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can and should do for their age and from their different starting points
 - ensuring that teachers challenge the most able so that these pupils achieve as well as they should, particularly in mathematics
 - building on the recent work to improve pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics to help pupils solve problems and deepen their learning in this subject
 - reviewing the approaches to teaching reading to ensure that more pupils have greater opportunities to read for meaning across a broader range of literature.
- Improve pupils' outcomes, especially in key stage 2, by:
 - ensuring that weaknesses in pupils' spelling and handwriting skills are tackled vigorously
 - building pupils' stamina and confidence so they approach learning with enthusiasm and a willingness to do their very best
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to write at length and for different purposes
 - ensuring that pupils gain the subject-specific skills and knowledge they need to flourish in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that checks on teaching are rigorous so that leaders have an accurate view of teaching and the impact of the new strategies in place to raise pupils' achievement
 - providing teachers with clear and precise feedback on their performance so they know exactly what they need to do to improve their teaching practice
 - developing the role of subject leaders so that they have a greater influence on teaching and pupils' outcomes across the curriculum
 - ensuring that governors ask pertinent questions about the progress different groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make in different classes and across different subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The quality of education at St Teresa’s has deteriorated since the previous inspection. It is no longer outstanding. Changes to the school’s context, alongside a new national curriculum and revised assessment arrangements, go some way to explaining why the school has declined. Nonetheless, leaders’ actions to ensure that teaching remained exceptionally strong, amidst local and national flux, have been too slow. Consequently, teaching and pupils’ outcomes by the end of key stage 2 are not good enough.
- Leaders have not ignored the decline. They have attempted to rise to the challenges they have faced over the years. They have taken steps to improve teaching and pupils’ outcomes, introducing new strategies and ensuring that teachers are trained in up-to-date techniques. However, this work has not made enough difference. This is because leaders fail to check the impact of their work rigorously enough. As a result, variation in teaching across different classrooms and in different subjects remains a stubborn feature of the school.
- Checks on teaching have insufficient impact. The conclusions reached by leaders about the quality of teaching are far too generous. Leaders’ findings are not backed up by the evidence in pupils’ books or in the progress that pupils make. Monitoring activities do not provide precise areas for development. This means that individual teachers do not have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their practice.
- Most subject leaders are new to their posts. While they are enthusiastic about their role, many are at the earliest stages of gaining the skills they need to lead their areas with confidence and authority. They have not been involved in making sure that the new school curriculum, which was introduced this academic year, is being followed in all classrooms. There is too much scope for some subjects, such as art and music, to slip through the net.
- The English and mathematics subject leaders have a closer grasp on their subjects. They know where there are gaps and recognise where improvement is needed. They have been successful in introducing some new ways of working. For example, a recent focus on reasoning in mathematics is shoring up pupils’ achievement in this subject. However, subject leaders’ influence in ensuring consistent approaches to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is limited.
- In some respects, the curriculum offered at St Theresa’s has much to applaud. Creative approaches to linking subjects together into enticing topics go a long way in capturing pupils’ interest. Topic launches, homework projects and end-of-unit celebrations not only make learning come alive but also harness the support and engagement of parents. A wide range of visits and visitors to the school enhances pupils’ experiences and extends their understanding of the world in which they live. Photographs collected by the school, and displayed on the website, indicate that the curriculum is highly effective in giving pupils magical memories that they will treasure forever.
- Recent changes to the curriculum mean that there is a clear framework in place for covering all subjects to meet the requirements of the national curriculum. However, practice on the ground is very different to policy. Pupils’ books reveal that teachers are paying scant attention to this new approach. Too little time is devoted to developing

age-appropriate subject-specific skills and knowledge to ensure that pupils are well prepared for their secondary education.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well. The school's Catholic values underpin a culture of tolerance, respect and care for others. Pupils are reflective and empathetic youngsters who are well prepared to consider different points of view and to accept differences. This positive feature can be seen in how pupils treat each other and the adults that they meet throughout the day. It also stands out in the many prayers and reflections pupils write about their lives, their community and their place in the world. Leaders' unrelenting focus on developing well-rounded youngsters ensures that pupils are ready to take their place as responsible citizens in modern Britain.
- The primary sport funding is used effectively to promote pupils' enjoyment of and participation in physical activity. The expertise of a sports coach is used to build pupils' gymnastic skills, while special events such as wrestling and dance classes enable pupils to try out activities they may not normally access. A thriving local network of schools means that pupils can compete in a range of different sporting events. This builds their confidence, enables them to develop their different physical skills and allows them to form positive relationships with pupils outside of the school gates.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is a shining light within school. These pupils flourish academically, personally and emotionally, whether they attend the resource base provision or work in their own classrooms. Knowledgeable and passionate leadership of this area of school means that pupils who find learning more difficult are at the forefront of everyone's work. Additional funding is used effectively to ensure that pupils receive the support they need. Consequently, these pupils make good progress over time.
- Funding for disadvantaged pupils is mostly used to provide additional adult support to help these pupils keep pace with their peers. This is working well, especially in reading and writing, due the skilled and confident teaching assistants who ensure that small-group activities are purposeful.
- Despite the decline since the previous inspection, leaders are demonstrating the capacity to bring about improvement. Improvements in the early years and key stage 1 mean that pupils are gaining a good start to their education. Leaders have successfully established strong provision for the small number of pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder. School development planning indicates that leaders know what needs to change and that they are taking the right action to bring about improvement. The school is no longer in decline. It is on the runway and poised for flight.

Governance of the school

- Governors' commitment and loyalty to the school are beyond reproach. They care passionately about the school and give their time generously to support leaders, staff and pupils. Frequent visits by a small core group of governors mean that they have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Minutes from governing body meetings indicate that governors are not afraid to ask questions. They keep a close eye on issues relating to pupils' safety and attendance. They also take their responsibilities in championing the needs of pupils who have

special educational needs and/or disabilities seriously, asking pertinent questions about the most vulnerable pupils in the school.

- In contrast, governors ask too few questions about the progress that different groups of pupils make across school, especially disadvantaged pupils, or about the quality of teaching. They, like school leaders, are not digging deeply enough to make sure that the strategies for improvement are having enough impact.
- Governors are broadly meeting their statutory responsibilities. They ensure that pupils are safe, funding is allocated appropriately and that the performance of staff, including the headteacher, is managed appropriately. However, they have been tardy in ensuring that the website is up to date and that the pupil premium strategy for the current academic year has been completed.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff across the whole school, regardless of their role, have been trained well to recognise the signs that may suggest pupils are victims of different types of abuse. They know the procedures that they should follow if they have any worries about pupils suffering or they have concerns about adults' behaviour.
- School records show that concerns raised by staff are followed through appropriately, using the advice and guidance from social care services in the local authority when necessary. Good use is made of external agencies to support pupils and their families when the need arises.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Although improving, the quality of teaching across the school is still too variable. This accounts for pupils' uneven progress across different subjects and explains why pupils' outcomes, especially in key stage 2, have declined.
- Low expectations of what pupils can and should achieve given their starting points mean that some pupils, particularly the most able, are not sufficiently challenged. A legacy of accepting work that is below standard has resulted in some older pupils struggling to meet the higher expectations of their new class teachers. Despite having the ability to complete more demanding work, pupils lack confidence, perseverance and enthusiasm. Some teachers have a hard task ahead of them ensuring that pupils achieve as well as they should for their age.
- Some teachers take too little account of the gaps in pupils' basic skills. They press on teaching the spelling, grammar and punctuation rules appropriate to pupils' age but fail to pick up that too many of these pupils have weak spelling skills and poor handwriting.
- Teachers do not pay enough attention to the subject-specific skills that pupils should acquire across a broad curriculum. Topic books show that literacy skills take precedence over other subjects. For example, in the topic on 'Explorers', pupils write biographies about famous people but do not build up their skills in understanding chronology or map work. While displays across the school show pupils' artistic flair,

there is little evidence to show pupils' progression of artistic skills using different techniques and media.

- Despite these variations, there are some clear strengths in teaching for some groups and classes. Teachers carefully attend to the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Activities are typically well matched to pupils' ability and the additional support that teachers provide to these pupils ensures that they keep pace with their learning.
- Teaching for those pupils who mainly work in the resource base provision is strong. Adults understand the needs of each pupil very well and, despite the wide range of abilities, they provide activities that interest pupils and build up their skills and knowledge well. Time is used effectively to ensure that pupils are settled and ready for work. For example, this group of pupils spend time each morning on physical activity, followed by a 'calm down' session which sets them up very well for the transition from home to school.
- Small-group teaching strategies, to support those pupils who need to catch up or have extra learning needs, operate like clockwork. Every available space in the school building is used to maximum effect. Skilled teaching assistants lead these small teaching sessions well. In classrooms, teaching assistants are highly effective in getting pupils with more complex learning needs ready to learn. Their calm approach, underpinned by the strong relationships they forge with pupils, means that potential disruption is minimised and de-escalated firmly and successfully.
- Teachers are kind, caring and enjoy working with the pupils in their care. This is evident in the warm greetings they provide each morning which get pupils off to a good start. They take the time to listen to pupils and value what everyone has to say. Classrooms are safe havens where pupils are willing to share their ideas without fear of embarrassment if they make a mistake or give an incorrect answer.
- Teachers are typically good at modelling new learning, providing useful structures so that pupils understand what they need to do to complete their work successfully.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy school. They cannot speak highly enough of the adults who keep them safe and make St Teresa's a very special place. They share a common pride in their school and are eager to contribute to its success. This is true from the very youngest children, who tidy up after themselves in the Reception classroom and in the dining hall, to the oldest pupils, who take on increasingly demanding roles in school, such as house captains.
- Pupils have a voice that is listened to in this school. The frequent meetings of the house teams enable leaders to hear pupils' views, which are then used to bring about improvements. For example, pupils' input into the systems for managing behaviour is directly linked to the new behaviour policy. Pupils not only appreciate the fact that adults take the time to listen, they gain invaluable skills in presenting their ideas to a

large audience in a constructive manner. This sets them up well for adult life, as they understand that they cannot always be right and that everyone's point of view is as valid as their own.

- The 'oaks and acorns' initiative is one of many ways that staff ensure that pupils see each other as an extended family. Older pupils take their role as 'oaks' very seriously to ensure that Reception children, the 'acorns', are welcomed and happy. The pupils who act as school chaplains play a crucial role in supporting the spiritual development of their peers, as well as acting as ambassadors for the school during community events.
- The pupils who spoke to inspectors were unanimous in their view that they are safe and free from worries about bullying or harassment. They point to some bullying in the past but the trust they have in all adults means that they feel secure and confident enough to report any concerns. Name-calling is rare. Pupils who need extra help to learn, including those pupils who attend the resource base provision, are not concerned about teasing on the playground. Parents who shared their thoughts about the school with inspectors echo the views expressed by pupils. They had no concerns about pupils' safety or welfare while at school.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. The guidance for keeping safe while using technology is comprehensive both for pupils and for parents. Pupils are well versed in how to report any online behaviour which gives rise to concerns. Visitors to school, such as the police and different national charities, support pupils' understanding of safety. Pupils are given the tools to report abuse or harm so that that they are not silent victims.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. This was very evident following the two special events taking place during the inspection. Despite the excitement of a poetry workshop and a pantomime, pupils behaved very well throughout each performance. They returned to class calmly and did not allow the special events to get in the way of learning. A small group of Year 1 pupils could not quite contain themselves, but they caused no disruption as they got on with their work, quietly singing the songs they had just heard.
- Adults rarely need to intervene to ensure that pupils' behaviour meets the expected standard. This is equally true for those pupils who attend the resource base provision. Strong and supportive relationships, underpinned by clear strategies for managing behaviour, ensure that pupils are calm and ready to learn. Pupils say that behaviour is typically good, a view which is shared by teachers, those adults who work in the kitchen and the adults who supervise lunchtime.
- Pupils are ripe to succeed. Their good behaviour, their desire to please their teachers and their joy at being in school all contribute to their positive attitudes. This readiness for learning has not always been seized well enough. Consequently, some older pupils do not put every effort into their work to make sure it is the very best that they can do.
- Attendance is improving over time for all groups and is almost in line with the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes no longer match the strengths identified in the previous inspection, especially by the end of key stage 2. A gentle decline over time escalated in 2016 when, under the new testing arrangements, Year 6 pupils made poor progress in reading and mathematics. The standards they achieved in both subjects were well below the national average by the time they left for their secondary schools. These pupils were not well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The outcomes from the 2017 assessments paint a more positive picture. Year 6 pupils made better progress, which, in turn, led to improved standards in reading and mathematics. In addition, the key stage 1 results show that younger pupils did well for the second year running. Their attainment was above the provisional national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are capitalising on their strong start in the early years so that they have the skills and knowledge to make a fruitful start in Year 3.
- School data and the work in pupils' books confirm that the upturn in the 2017 outcomes is being maintained and built upon. Key stage 1 pupils are continuing to surge forward and pupils in key stage 2 are making stronger progress than in the past. The decline has been arrested and there are signs of sustained improvement, especially for younger pupils. However, not all weaknesses have been eradicated. Variation in pupils' outcomes in some subjects and in some classes remains a feature of the school. The momentum that pupils gain in one class is not maintained in others. It is for this reason that pupils' achievement requires improvement.
- The proportion of pupils who gain the Year 1 phonics screening check is broadly in line with, and sometimes above, the national average, over time. Young pupils are equipped with the skills to become successful early readers. Older pupils typically read with accuracy, fluency and expression. Reading journals show that the pupils in Years 5 and 6 are developing their ability to analyse literature and infer meaning from the text, which goes beyond basic comprehension. This is not true for all pupils, and some do not have enough opportunity to build similar skills or to explore a broader range of literature.
- Pupils have an appropriate grasp of number patterns and calculations. In some classes, pupils' books show increasing opportunities to solve problems which require reasoning skills. This is helping to deepen their learning and strengthening their ability to tackle mathematics work with confidence. Consequently, pupils' achievement in mathematics is improving. However, not all pupils benefit from the same rich experiences.
- Pupils' achievement in writing, a strength in recent years, fell in 2017. Pupils' books explain why. Too few pupils have the opportunity to write at length and for different purposes. Many pupils lack the stamina to keep on writing and to continually improve their work. Some pupils, especially in key stage 2, have weaknesses in their spelling and handwriting skills which hold them back.
- While there are pleasing signs of improvement in reading and mathematics, pupils' achievement across other areas of the curriculum is not good enough. Topic books from the start of this term, and those completed during the last academic year, show that pupils are not able to develop subject-specific skills to any great depth. They are

prevented from becoming young geographers, historians and scientists. This undoubtedly hinders their achievement once they enter secondary school.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress across the school. Pupils who attend the resource base provision move forward at a swift pace due to the care and attention that is put into meeting their very specific individual needs.
- The achievement of the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, is much more variable, especially in mathematics. Although the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards in 2017 improved, their achievement across school is uneven. Too often this group receive work which fails to inspire or challenge their thinking. Low expectations in the past have not prepared this group to work as hard as they should for their age and ability.
- While the relatively small number of disadvantaged pupils in each year group makes comparisons difficult, there is a clear pattern in their achievement. It mirrors that of others in the school. Disadvantaged pupils did poorly in 2016, but much better in 2017, so that their achievement is closer to that of other pupils nationally. School data shows the positive impact of small-group teaching sessions in reading and writing. However, this work is not making the same difference to the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in mathematics.
- Over the years, differences between boys and girls have emerged. Girls outshine boys in reading and writing, whereas boys have the edge in mathematics. Sometimes the different number of boys and girls in each class skews these figures. Pupils' books do not point to any marked discrepancies between these two groups. However, at times, boys are more inclined to put their pen down when they think they have completed enough work.

Early years provision

Good

- Early years provision was good at the last inspection. It remains so. However, this does not tell the full story of the improvements that have been made in this area of the school. Effective leadership over time has led to better teaching and stronger outcomes for children. The time that children spend in the early years sets them up well for future success.
- Children enter Reception from 19 different pre-school settings. Good arrangements for transition mean that the children quickly settle and gel as one group. The care that adults lavish on their new arrivals swiftly sets the tone and ensures that children feel safe, comfortable and can spread their wings.
- Most children in Reception are ready for school, although some have lower than expected skills and knowledge for their age, particularly in their ability to communicate. Adults use their knowledge of children's starting points very well to break down these barriers to learning. Children's difficulties with language or an unwillingness to communicate disappear very quickly due to the relentless focus on speaking and listening. Although children had only been at the school for a short time during the inspection, they were happily chatting to adults and to each other.
- From these starting points children make good progress and many catch up quickly. As

a result, the proportion of children who gain a good level of development has increased each year. In 2017, it was above average and over three quarters of the children were more than ready to meet the demands offered by the Year 1 curriculum.

- Children who have greater difficulty with learning are spotted quickly and supported effectively. Consequently, children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same rates of progress as their friends. This is also true for the very small number of disadvantaged children, who have benefited from their time in Reception over the past few years.
- Children are keen to learn and eager to take part in the wide range of activities adults provide. They work cooperatively with their classmates, take turns, listen and offer a helping hand when needed. For example, the small group who were using tools to fix shapes to a corkboard continually checked the work of their classmates. They offered pointers to those children who found manipulating the tools more of a challenge. This was done in such a friendly and encouraging way that no one took offence. Children continued to work side by side and with good cheer.
- Children behave well, follow routines and ensure that their behaviour does not pose a risk to themselves or to others. They are kept safe by well-trained adults who ensure that the welfare requirements are met in full.
- Adults understand how young children learn. This is apparent in the activities provided for the children in their care. Children were completely captivated making their own 'alien juice'. Their attention did not stray for a minute, while adults skilfully developed children's language skills, their fine motor skills and promoted their understanding of health and safety. At times, however, adults miss opportunities to challenge the thinking of the more able children.
- The new early years leader and class teacher have quickly formed a strong partnership. They know what needs to happen next to strengthen the early years provision further. Their work with parents is positive in ensuring strong links between home and school to aid children's learning and their personal development.

School details

Unique reference number	105247
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10032804

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	152
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Denise Kelly
Headteacher	Mrs Diane Bohan
Telephone number	01204 333163
Website	www.st-teresas.bolton.sch.uk
Email address	bohand@st-teresas.bolton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 February 2008

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the pupil premium strategy and the primary sport funding for the current academic year.
- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British heritage. Pupils of Asian heritage make up the next largest group in the school.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. There are more pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an educational, health and care plan in the school than found nationally.
- The number of pupils who receive support through the pupil premium funding is broadly average.

- The school provides specialist provision for up to six pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder. This provision was established in 2014.
- There have been some recent changes to the school, following two established leaders leaving at the end of the 2017 summer term. Two new teachers joined the school in September, an acting deputy headteacher has been appointed and two members of staff have taken on senior leadership roles.
- The school meets the government's floor standards. These are the minimum standards and rate of progress expected in reading, writing and mathematics of pupils in key stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classrooms to observe teaching, pupils' learning and behaviour.
- They observed and spoke to pupils during lessons and at play. Inspectors met formally with two groups of pupils and heard pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and two representatives from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including arrangements for safeguarding. They took account of school information about pupils' outcomes and scrutinised pupils' books.
- Inspectors chatted to parents at the start of the school day. There were insufficient responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, to consider as part of the evidence gathered during the inspection.

Inspection team

Joanne Olsson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Doris Bell	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Hollister	Ofsted Inspector

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