

St Clare's Catholic Primary School

Garmoyle Close, Liverpool, Merseyside L15 0DW

Inspection dates

21–22 November 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	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils remain below the standards expected nationally. Improvements have been inconsistent.
- Pupils' progress has improved, but it is still not good enough. A legacy of poor leadership and weak teaching has led to gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills, and understanding.
- Gaps in pupils' learning are not being eradicated quickly enough in some classes. Progress for pupils from lower starting points, particularly in Years 3 and Year 4, is slower than for other groups in the school.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, leaders have not ensured that the curriculum always allows pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in a logical way.
- Teaching does not meet the needs of some pupils. Consequently, they do not make the accelerated progress they need to catch up, particularly in their writing.

The school has the following strengths

- This school is improving. The inspirational leadership from the present headteacher has brought about a new energy among leaders and staff. This is bringing about the necessary changes to tackle the remaining weaknesses in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for continued improvement. They are proactive in holding the headteacher to account.
- Pupils' good behaviour, and their positive attitudes to their learning, reflect the warm, caring atmosphere within the school.
- Leadership and teaching of the early years is good. Children settle quickly in an environment that nurtures, excites and stimulates them as learners. Consequently, they make rapid progress from low starting points.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school, and the improvements that have been made since the appointment of the present headteacher.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve effectiveness of leadership and management, by:
 - embedding the work on the curriculum so that pupils acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills they should have in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - building on the improvements made since the last inspection in the quality of teaching and assessment, in order to quickly identify pupils' next steps, and accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in writing for pupils in Years 3 and Year 4 who have lower starting points.
- Improve outcomes for pupils, by:
 - continuing to raise the quality and standard of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in reading, writing and mathematics
 - ensuring that pupils are effectively supported, through consistently good teaching, so that a higher proportion make the accelerated progress needed to reach the expected standards nationally.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and staff have worked tirelessly to tackle the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The school is no longer inadequate. The changes brought about by the present headteacher have reignited a passion and determination in leaders, staff and governors. They work as an efficient and effective team and have a clear vision for continued improvement. Pupils spoken to during the inspection said the headteacher has 'brightened up the school and made it a nice place to come to every day'.
- Leaders and governors have strongly and effectively challenged any underperformance in teaching, and taken effective action to ensure that teaching is improving. Staff speak highly of the effective support and training they receive, including opportunities to work with other colleagues and other schools.
- Leaders' evaluation of the strengths of the school, and priorities for further development, are accurate. This enables them to systematically build on their successes, particularly in mathematics. Leaders are working hard to eradicate the legacy of previously poor leadership and weak teaching that still lingers in the outcomes for pupils in both key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Middle leaders monitor their subjects and take action to bring about improvement. For example they have made changes to the teaching of phonics in Reception and key stage 1. They ensure staff have the skills and knowledge that they need to teach well. The school's assessment information shows improving achievement for younger pupils in school.
- Leaders have identified that improvements in writing for some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with low starting points, is hampered by their lack of understanding, knowledge and skills in English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Consequently, they are unable to improve their writing effectively and progress is slower than expected. Leaders are working hard to bring about accelerated progress for these pupils.
- Leaders allocate the additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities diligently. They ensure that staff receive training to meet pupils' needs effectively. Detailed analysis of information identifies key priorities and barriers to pupils' learning. Leaders work with a range of other agencies and professionals, including working with other providers, to provide the support needed for each pupil. Consequently, this group of pupils make the good progress that they should and succeed at school. Leaders' analysis of assessment information, and evidence seen on inspection, show that even where progress is slower, progress rates are improving over time.
- Leaders have worked diligently to create a curriculum that meets the needs of pupils and captures their interests. Displays around the school celebrate pupils' achievements. Pupils are given opportunities to use and apply their literacy and mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, in history older pupils develop their research skills in a series of lessons which build up to a very reflective piece of writing about SS Windrush. However in other subjects, leaders have not ensured a structured and coherent

progression of skills, knowledge and understanding. This slows pupils' progress.

- Leaders have developed activities that provide opportunities to improve pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, for example through the fundraising event to purchase books for the local hospital. Pupils spoke with pride about the contribution they made to help people less fortunate than themselves.
- Leaders ensure that pupils who speak English as an additional language receive the support they need to help them make the most of their time in school. The strategies used make sure pupils are making effective progress and where this is slower, progress rates are improving.
- Following the previous inspection, leaders reviewed how they spend the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have diligently analysed the barriers to pupils' learning and put strategies in place to overcome any difficulties with learning. Leaders allocate funding to support pupils and ensure that they benefit from a range of opportunities that enrich their experiences and enhance their learning. For example, pupils visited the seaside and investigated rock pools prior to a series of lessons about habitats in science.
- The physical education (PE) and sport funding for schools is used very effectively. A specialist sports coach is employed to deliver a range of sporting activities for pupils, such as yoga and gymnastics, and to share good practice and improve teaching skills for staff. An increased number of pupils take part in sport outside of school as a result of the improved PE provision, for example many have joined a gymnastics club locally.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about leaders and staff. They appreciate the support and care given to their children and the opportunities that they have in school. Parents of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities speak very highly of the care and support they have received. They feel valued and listened to by leaders and staff, as partners in their children's learning.

Governance of the school

- As with all areas of the school, governance is now stronger than it was at the previous inspection. Governance arrangements have been restructured and roles and responsibilities are clear.
- Governors have the same appetite as school leaders to build on recent improvements. They attend training to keep up to date with new initiatives. They are very reflective on the challenges facing the school and understand the priorities for the future of the school. They support and challenge leaders and they are proactive in ensuring that recommendations for improvement are carried out.
- Governors are regularly involved in the life of the school. They monitor pupils' progress and talk to pupils and parents. They work effectively with leaders and offer good levels of support and challenge.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding is an integral part of the curriculum and pupils thrive in a safe environment, feeling valued and cared for. Leaders and staff work diligently to keep pupils safe, and pupils feel safe in school.
- Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements, protocols and practices, are fit for purpose. This includes online safety and the filters necessary to keep pupils safe on the internet.
- Staff work closely with the local community, other professionals and families. Staff receive regular training and weekly updates on any potential areas of risk for the pupils. The curriculum is carefully planned so that pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers have high expectations of themselves and their pupils. Support from well-informed subject leaders has strengthened teaching in many subjects. This is especially true in the teaching of mathematics. The quality of teaching is improving but outcomes for pupils remain below the standards expected nationally.
- Teachers use assessment to ensure that tasks appropriately match the needs of the majority of pupils. An increasing proportion of the most able pupils are now working at a greater depth, especially in reading and mathematics because of the greater challenge teachers provide in these subjects. However, teachers do not always provide enough information for pupils to improve their grammar, spelling and punctuation in order to improve the quality of their writing. This has slowed the progress some pupils make, particularly in Year 3 and Year 4.
- Staff have nurtured pupils' strong and positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils work purposefully and with confidence. They are happy to learn from their mistakes. Younger pupils spoken to said, 'It's ok to get things wrong; mistakes help you to learn.'
- The quality of teaching across the school is improving as a result of well-prepared learning activities that capture the interests of the pupils. Teachers use questions effectively to deepen pupils' understanding and make them think hard. This is bringing about improvements in the progress that most pupils make.
- Pupils take pride in their work and this is reflected in the high standard of presentation seen in books, particularly in English and mathematics books, and in the displays around school. However, teachers do not always ensure that learning activities in other subjects allow pupils to improve and develop their knowledge and skills effectively. The progress pupils make is not always clear.
- During learning activities, skilled support staff quickly pick up on any misconceptions, especially in the accurate use of spoken language. They use questions effectively to encourage the pupils to think through what they want to say before they write it down. As a result, accuracy in younger pupils' writing is improving.
- Parents are given accurate information about their children's progress. Parents spoken to said that teachers are always available and that leaders listen to their concerns. Leaders provide sessions for parents to help them support their children at home. These are well attended and support the progress pupils make.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Older pupils, spoken to during the inspection, said that the school has improved a lot since the previous inspection. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. There is a genuine warmth and respect for each other.
- Pupils enjoy the challenges teachers give to them. Pupils spoken to said, 'If you don't know something, teachers will help you to learn it.' They take pride in their work and are proud of their achievements.
- Older pupils willingly take on responsibilities within school, for example head boy and head girl, ambassadors for English and mathematics and representatives from each year group on the school council. The mathematics ambassadors set weekly challenges for pupils on a wall display, to help them improve their reasoning skills.
- Pupils appreciate the opportunities they have and they want to help others less fortunate than themselves. They have been proactive in raising funds for local charities. The recent fundraising for the local hospital was a tremendous success.
- Breakfast club is very well attended and contributes greatly to the personal development and welfare of pupils. There is a wide range of appropriate activities provided. Strong positive relationships between pupils and adults ensure a good start for pupils at the beginning of the school day.
- Pupils benefit from the range of clubs and extra-curricular activities they can attend. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to perform together in the gospel choir, and with pupils from other schools. Attending the gymnastics club in school has led to pupils continuing their enjoyment of the sport as members of a club in the local community. The lunchtime club run by the learning mentor is very well attended. Pupils spoke with warmth and enthusiasm about staff and the activities available to them.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the care and support provided by dedicated staff. Those spoken to during the inspection commented positively on how the workshops have helped them. They are successfully developing the skills they need to support their children at home, particularly with reading and mathematics.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. They talk confidently about safety on the internet and the dangers of sharing information on social media, as well as the importance of cyber safety. They understand that there are different forms of bullying. They spoke with confidence that if there was any bullying it would be sorted out very quickly. One pupil spoken to said, 'You just remember your safe hands and the five people you can tell if you are worried or scared.' Pupils have confidence in the adults around them to keep them safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils feel very happy and safe in school because they know the adults care about them and look after them. Pupils feel valued and listened

to.

- Attendance rates are above the national average for the majority of pupils, including pupils who are disadvantaged. Pupils appreciate the incentives and certificates they can achieve and understand the importance of attending school every day, and arriving on time. Where attendance is lower for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, leaders and staff have worked closely with their families. Consequently, the attendance rates for this group are improving.
- Pupils are well mannered and polite. Their behaviour in lessons, at playtimes and as they move around the school is good. Their friendliness to each other, and good-natured play, reflects the positive, caring ethos which has been created in the school. Inappropriate behaviour is rarely seen, but pupils say if there is any it is dealt with very quickly.
- Pupils spoken to said, 'Since the new headteacher arrived we have a much better attitude to learning and our behaviour is much better; it's really good now.' Pupils' attitude, and positive mentality, contributes to the progress they are making.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Published data shows that outcomes at the end of key stage 2 have declined since the previous inspection. These pupils were most affected by the previously weak teaching and poor leadership. Despite the recent improvements in the quality of teaching seen during the inspection, these pupils were too far behind to reach the standards they should for their age.
- Pupils from lower starting points at the end of key stage 1 are not making rapid enough progress in their learning. Gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding in phonics, grammar, punctuation and spelling are hindering their progress, particularly in writing.
- It is evident that these weak outcomes are not replicated for all pupils currently at the school. Teachers are working hard to eradicate the weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning previously seen. As a result, the improving outcomes in key stage 1, especially in reading and mathematics, show there is a strong foundation for improvement.
- The school's own assessment information shows that an increasing proportion of pupils are now working at the expected standard for their age in phonics in Year 1. A higher proportion of pupils in Year 2 are also working at the standard expected for their age from previously low starting points.
- For older pupils in the school, assessment information shows that a higher proportion of pupils are working at greater depth, particularly in reading and mathematics. This improvement was also seen in pupils' work and during lessons. However, these improvements have not had enough time to impact on improving outcomes at the end of each key stage.
- Work in pupils' books clearly shows that the effective action taken by leaders has improved the quality of teaching and learning across a range of subjects, especially in reading and mathematics.

- The improved quality in the presentation of pupils' work reflects the high expectations set by teachers and the pride pupils take in their achievements. This is contributing to the progress some pupils make. They use new vocabulary with increasing accuracy, and produce well-written reports. For example in geography, younger pupils are developing early geographical skills, including identifying features from the locality using aerial photographs and identifying places on a map of the corresponding local area.
- Disadvantaged pupils are supported well to enable them to catch up. Where progress is slower for disadvantaged pupils, progress rates are improving. The difference between their progress and that of their peers is slowly diminishing by the end of key stage 2, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported by specialist trained staff and consequently these pupils make at least expected or better progress.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are very well supported by well-trained staff. This group of pupils are making progress from their starting points as a result of this support. Leaders and staff work closely with a range of outside agencies to support the pupils and their families. Careful monitoring of their progress allows teachers to meet their needs effectively through well-considered activities across a range of subjects.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have taken decisive action following the last inspection. The teaching of the youngest children is good. Leaders and staff have created a bright and caring environment in which children thrive.
- Professional development is a priority. Staff have received training so that they have the skills they need to teach the youngest children. Staff work closely with other professionals and each other to share their expertise. Leaders have created a culture of high expectations.
- The majority of children enter Nursery with skills, knowledge and understanding that are below those typical for their age. Leaders and staff work closely with parents and, consequently, children settle quickly and make rapid progress.
- Leaders use the information they collect about children's learning to accurately identify their next steps. Teachers plan activities that build on the children's knowledge, skills and understanding. As a result, an increasing proportion of children make accelerated progress in all areas of learning. However, this is still below the proportion of children who reach a good level of development nationally by the end of Reception.
- Leaders have identified that the key barrier to children's learning is their poor development of language, especially for the growing proportion of children who speak English as an additional language. As a result of the specialised training staff receive, questions are used effectively to expand children's language and deepen their understanding. The additional funding to support disadvantaged children is used well. Where progress is slow, progress rates are improving.
- Leaders and staff have developed a curriculum that stimulates and excites the children. Activities are skilfully designed to enhance their learning and language skills. For example, staff had designed a 'car wash' outside. Children use their writing and

number skills confidently. They make lists of customers' names, write down phone numbers, handle money and engage in telephone conversations about waiting times. For example, while talking on the telephone one child said, 'I'm sorry you'll have to come back in five minutes, there's a long queue today.' Staff use questions skilfully to extend and enhance children's learning and children make good progress.

- Staff promote children's independent skills successfully through clear and well-established routines that contribute to the children's ongoing safety and welfare. They provide opportunities throughout the day for children to work cooperatively to solve problems. Positive behaviours for learning are nurtured by staff and children make progress.
- The children who have SEN and/or disabilities in the early years are very well supported to allow them to have access to all areas of the curriculum. Staff have received extra training which allows them to meet the needs of this group of children. Parents speak highly of the care, guidance and support their children receive from staff.

School details

Unique reference number	104648
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10039786

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	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon Aidan Prescott
Headteacher	Kate Peaston
Telephone number	0151 7334318
Website	www.mystclares.com
Email address	clares-ht@st-clares.liverpool.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–27 January 2016

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is of similar size to other primary schools and has a Nursery class.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is at the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than the usual transition points is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported because they have SEN and/or disabilities is at the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes, carrying out joint observations with senior leaders. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils. They also talked with others informally around the school. Discussions were held with staff, including senior and middle leaders. A meeting was held with three members of the governing body including the vice-chair. The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority, the interim headteacher supporting the school, and a representative from the local archdiocese.
- Inspectors took account of the 15 responses to Ofsted's online, Parent View, survey. Inspectors spoke with a group of parents and parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents. These included the school's self-evaluation and development plan, information about the school's performance and a selection of policies, including those relating to safeguarding, the pupil premium review and the review of governance.

Inspection team

Amanda Stringer, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ian Shackleton	Ofsted Inspector
David Blackburne	Ofsted Inspector

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